

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

# Evading Brexit

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David Cameron's use of evasion in  
parliamentary context

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract <p>Tutkielmani päätavoite on tutkia välttelevien vastausten käyttöä parlamentaarisisessa kontekstissa. Tutkimukseni kohdehenkilö on Iso-Britannian entinen pääministeri David Cameron ja materiaali sijoittuu ajallisesti keväälle ja kesälle 2016. Tutkimusmateriaalini on kerätty Hansard-korpuksesta ja koostuu 112 pääministerin kyselytuntien kysymys–vastaus -parista, jotka käsittelevät aiheeltaan Iso-Britannian EU-jäsenyyttä ja sitä koskevaa vuoden 2016 kansanäänestystä. Tavoite on tutkia, kuinka paljon välttelyä Cameronin vastauksissa esiintyi. Oletukseni on, että Cameronin välttelevät vastaukset lisääntyvät kansanäänestyksen ajankohtaa lähestyttäessä.</p> <p>Työni tutkimustausta koostuu välttelyn ja kohteliaisuuden teorioista, jotka keskittyvät erityisesti poliittiseen ja parlamentaariseen kontekstiin. Käyttämäni viitekehityksen on kehittänyt Parameswary Rasiah (2009) ja metodi on kehitetty nimenomaan välttelevien vastausten analysoimiseen parlamentaarisisessa kontekstissa. Tutkimukseni ohessa testataan ja arvioin Rasiahin metodin soveltuvuutta valitsemani aineiston analysointiin.</p> <p>Tutkielmassani esittelen Rasiahin metodin eri vaiheet ja sovellan niitä omaan aineistooni. Tutkin materiaalia sekä kokonaisuutena että aikajanojen kautta saadakseni paremman kuvan siitä, miten kysymys- ja vastaustyyppien määrät kehittyivät ajanjakson aikana. Rasiahin metodi soveltuu hyvin aineistoni tutkimiseen, mutta menetelmä vaatii muutamia lisäyksiä, jotta kysytyistä kysymyksistä saadaan parempi kuva. Kysymysten tarkempi tarkastelu auttaa hahmottamaan syitä vastausten laadun taustalla. Koen tämän tärkeäksi osaksi välttelevien vastausten tutkimusta, sillä aiemmat tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, että kysymysten laatu vaikuttaa vastausten laatuun.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittavat, että 44,6 % aineiston vastauksista ovat vältteleviä. Suurin osa Cameronin välttelystä on vahvuudeltaan lievää tai keskitasoista, vahvasti vältteleviä vastauksia löytyy aineistosta vain yksi. Cameron jättää kokonaan reagoimatta 11 kysymykseen. Cameronin käyttämän välttelyn määrä ei kasva ajan kuluessa, toisin kuin oletin. Aiemmat välttelevien vastausten tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, että jos kysymykseen sisältyy kasvoja uhkaava puheakti (face-threatening act), on todennäköistä, että vastaus on välttelevä. Tutkimukseni tulokset tukevat tätä väitettä.</p> <p>Välttelevien vastausten analysoinnin merkitys pääministerin kyselytunnin kontekstissa kiteytyy kyselytunnin tarkoitukseen ja merkityksellisyyteen. Yksi kyselytunnin tärkeimmistä tehtävistä on varmistaa, että hallitus kantaa vastuun toimistaan. Jos hallituksen päämies ei kuitenkaan vastaa hänelle osoitettuihin kysymyksiin, se heikentää pääministerin kyselytuntien merkityksellisyyttä.</p>		
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*I have addressed 5,500 questions from this Dispatch Box; I will leave it for others to work out how many I have answered.*

(David Cameron, HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, col 289)

## 1 Introduction

When a question receives a vague response that offends no-one but does not truly answer the question, someone might facetiously suggest that the respondent pursues a career in politics. According to popular wisdom, politicians do not give direct answers to questions. This is a common stereotype all over the world, across different cultures. General knowledge like this always evokes curiosity in the academic world. Something is “known to be true,” but, well, is it? Evasion used by politicians has attracted interest of several scholars throughout the years. Most politicians try to balance on a very thin line between standing strong behind their opinions and attracting as many voters as possible. This balancing act has created a stereotype that has only grown stronger ever since it became possible for people to see and hear politicians answer questions unprepared on television or radio. Evasion in political interviews has been studied to a great extent, but what about parliamentary context, when the questions are not asked by a journalist, but another politician?

Parliamentary discourse is quite different from any other context of spoken language. The conservative setting of a parliamentary session, where strict social rules of behaviour and politeness are expected to be followed, conceives its own, unique means of communication. Therefore, parliamentary discourse is an interesting subject for sociolinguistic studies. The main focus of this study is the use of evasion in a parliamentary context. The study observes the ways the former British Prime Minister (PM) David Cameron responded to the questions he faced during the Questions to the Prime Minister sessions over the spring and summer of 2016. More precisely, the study concentrates on the questions regarding the referendum on whether the United Kingdom should remain a member of the European Union or not. The primary research question of this study asks to what extent did David Cameron use evasion techniques in his responses to these questions? The cases where evasion

is used will be individually analysed and categorised, to find out what kind of evasion techniques were used by Cameron. Furthermore, I will investigate whether there is a notable increase or decrease in the number of evasions used by Cameron throughout the time span towards the referendum. I hypothesise that over the time period there will be an increasing number of questions that challenge Cameron's position and the referendum, which would hypothetically then lead to an increase in the number of evasions used. All things considered, I will aim to form a comprehensive overview of Cameron's evasive responses from this time period.

The framework used in this study has been defined by Parameswary Rasiah in her paper published in 2009. In this paper Rasiah presents a framework for systematic analysis of evasion in parliamentary context. The framework is based on Rasiah's doctoral dissertation from 2007, in which she investigated evasion in the transcripts of Australia's House of Representatives' Question Time from February and March 2003, with the topic of Iraq. My goal is to implement the framework in a slightly different context, with material from the British Parliament, a longer time period, and a different topic. One purpose of this study is to test how the framework adapts to a different data set and political context. The framework was presented as a basis for future studies and it does not directly refer to Rasiah's dissertation. Rasiah included a small pilot study with the framework to show an example of how the framework could be applied. As my study is a Master's Thesis and therefore limited in its scale, I will use the pilot study as my template, instead of aiming to study my data in a similar scale to Rasiah's dissertation. Hence, I will aim to use the framework as it is presented in the 2009 publication and adapt it where necessary to suit my data set and study goals.

In Section 2 I will discuss the political and linguistic background of this study. To help set this study in a larger context I will discuss features of parliamentary discourse and defining properties of the sessions known as Questions to the Prime Minister, as well as give a brief biographical profile of David Cameron. The section 2.2 of linguistic background will discuss relevant previous studies and theories on politeness and evasive responses. In Section 3 I will describe the corpus and data set of this study and how the data was chosen and collected. I will present the framework and the methods of analysing the data and discuss how the framework was adapted to suit my purposes. In Section 4 I will present the results of the analysis. I will give quantitative results of how the data was analysed into different

categories defined by the framework, and present tables to make the quantitative results easier to examine. I will analyse the results on a timeline to create a comprehensive view on Cameron's use of evasion from the first half of 2016 and to see whether there were any increasing or decreasing patterns in his use of evasion or the types of the questions. In Section 5 I will discuss the findings in the context of the political and linguistic background, review how Rasiah's framework adapted to my data set, and discuss the limitations of this study as well as suggestions for future studies. Finally, in Section 6 I will recapitulate the findings of this study and evaluate their significance in a conclusive chapter. In this paper I will use "they" as a generic pronoun when the gender of the referred person is not known.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Political background

#### 2.1.1 *Parliamentary Discourse*

Politics has always been a field of interesting rhetoric and special semantic settings. Politicians are generally expected to be eloquent speakers, and indeed different aspects of political speech have been well studied from linguistic point of view in the past. Parliamentary discourse is these days considered a sub-genre of political speech; it is political speech in its most formal and institutionalised form (Bayley, 2004:1). Cornelia Ilie defines parliamentary speech as "a norm-regulated interaction among politically elected representatives for deliberation and decision-making purposes in specific institutional settings." It differs greatly from other forms of speech and is restricted and shaped by a large number of particular communication patterns (Ilie, 2009:61).

To advance their agenda, a politician must be convincing and win people over. The politician must make their position and opinions clear to voters by challenging their opponents and their views. However, to maintain peace in Parliament and to seem civil in the eyes of voters, the politician is expected to still be polite towards their opponents. Politeness generally must be shown in Parliament for a politician to be convincing to the public and the rest of the parliament. Yet, politicians should not show impartiality, but are expected to take sides. When a politician is interviewed, they generally tend to avoid discussing the downsides of

their views and actions, while highlighting the advantages. Similar setting of pleasing, challenging, and convincing applies to the Prime Minister during Prime Minister's question time as well. What differs between a question-answer setting in interviews and in Parliament is the impartiality of the questioner. As written by Peter Bull and Pam Wells in the context of the British Parliament: "As journalists, interviewers are expected to be impartial. [...] In contrast, politicians are restricted by no such constraints. They can be as partial and as unashamedly partisan as they choose. Criticisms and accusations are permitted in the House" (Bull & Wells, 2012:3–4). This gives a very specific tone to the exchanges inside Parliament and creates an interesting setting for sociolinguistic research.

### 2.1.2 *Questions to the Prime Minister*

Questions to the Prime Minister, commonly known as Prime Minister's Questions (PMQ), is currently held every Wednesday at noon in the British Parliament. The duration of the session is approximately 30 minutes ("Question time", n.d.). This session gives the floor to Members of Parliament, offering them a way to seek information by asking the PM any questions that relate to the PM's responsibilities or government actions. Another, maybe even more important core purpose of the session is to hold the Government accountable for its actions, which is one of the main functions of Parliament (Rasiah, 2007:1). PMQ has a long history in British politics, and as the session is quite short, only the most important political events of the week are discussed during the session. A list of topics discussed during PMQ will give a good overview of the most burning topics in the British Parliament each week, and these short sessions are excellent at portraying the dynamics inside the House, as well. As described by Cornelia Ilie, "the nature and the intensity of the debates during Question Time is normally a good indicator of the political climate and of the power balance between the representatives of the major political parties at that very moment" (2009:64).

Each session is opened by the MP with the first floor. A Speaker is present in every session; his role is to keep order in the session and give the floor to the MPs. The MPs who want to ask a question must table their questions beforehand, and the Speaker will then give them the floor in a random order (House of Commons, 2014). In the beginning of each session the first MP to speak will ask the PM to let the



House know their engagements of the day. After the reply the same MP is allowed a supplementary question, in which they raise a particular political issue in the form of a question to the PM. The question must relate to the PM's general responsibilities or to a governmental matter. After the PM's response, the floor will be given to another MP (House of Commons, 2014). Usually all MPs only table in the first question of the PM's engagements. If their turn comes after the first question, they only ask their supplementary question. This way only the question about the PM's engagements will be tabled, and the PM will not know what other questions they will face during the session ("Question time", n.d.). Only two MPs are allowed to ask more than one question: the leader of the third largest party is allowed to ask two questions, and the Leader of the Opposition is allowed maximum six questions in total. These MPs can either ask follow-up questions for other MPs or raise a topic of their own ("What are Prime Minister's Questions?", 2004). This single weekly session is well known for its dramatic nature and is closely followed throughout the country. According to a YouGov survey in September 2015, 47% of the participants had either watched or listened to the PMQ session of the week or had seen clips of it in the news or elsewhere (Kellner, 2015). As the Prime Minister generally does not get the questions beforehand, the answers cannot be prepared in advance. This makes PMQs excellent material for the study of evasion, as evasion of uncomfortable questions would not necessarily happen as much if the respondent would be able to formulate their responses beforehand.

The sociolinguistic setting of PMQs is quite unique. The questions are formally presented to the respondent through the Speaker, and other Members as well as the PM are referred to in third person. Similarly, the PM will give their answers to the House by addressing the Speaker. As mentioned in the previous Section 2.1.1, MPs are generally expected to show politeness in the parliament. PMQs, however, are well known for their verbal aggressiveness and highly confrontational nature. The Speaker is present to maintain order in the House and to punish MPs who break the rules of the House. If the Speaker judges the language of an utterance to be unparliamentary, they can ask the MP to withdraw the utterance, or even suspend the MP from the House if necessary (Bull & Wells, 2012:4). Nevertheless, as long as the MPs follow the conventions of parliamentary language, they are allowed to speak freely in the House of Commons, protected by parliamentary privilege (2012:4). This freedom of speech leaves the MPs with

copious ways to express criticism and attacks to the opposing side, and has led to the contentious nature of PMQs

In the spring and summer of 2016, from which time the data of this study has been collected, the Speaker of the House of Commons was John Bercow. The Leader of Opposition was Jeremy Corbyn, and the third largest party was Scottish National Party (SNP), its leader at the time being Angus Robertson.

### *2.1.3 David Cameron*

David Cameron became the Prime Minister in 2010, which made him the youngest Prime Minister in the United Kingdom in nearly 200 years (Hough, 2010).

According to a biography by Francis Elliot and James Hanning, Cameron was born in 1966 in London as a third child to a stockbroker father and a magistrate mother (Elliot & Hanning, 2012:2). Cameron attended the highly prestigious Eton public school, famous for educating many high-profile individuals, including several members of the Royal Family and 19 Prime Ministers (Moss, 2010). After Eton, Cameron continued his education in Oxford University and studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics (Elliot & Hanning, 2012:3). According to Elliot & Hanning, politics was Cameron's forte already at Eton, and it was during that time when Cameron decided to pursue a career in a political field (2012:2). Cameron won a seat in Parliament for Witney constituency in 2001, and held it for over 15 years, until September 2016 (Stewart, 2016). Before answering questions in PMQs as the Prime Minister, he was the leader of the Conservative Party for five years, confronting in his turn the former Prime Ministers Tony Blair (1997–2007) and Gordon Brown (2007–2010) (Elliot & Hanning, 2012:9).

When analysing Cameron's use of specific linguistic features and his rhetoric it is important to keep in mind his background. Interesting from the point of view of this study is that Eton and Oxford both have a strong history in debating. The single-sex boys' boarding school often hosts debating contests, and the university's well-known debating club Oxford Union, running since 1823, has been holding weekly debates for over 190 years ("Debating: Eton Open", n.d; "Formal debates", n.d). Cameron has undoubtedly been trained in debating from quite a young age and has received his education in institutions where good debating skills and eloquence are highly appreciated. Inevitably the verbal skills offered by the prestigious

education helped to prepare him for his political career. Good debating skills include the ability to evade uncomfortable questions and use the floor to win people over when he gets the chance. Evasion is not only a way to avoid challenging situations, but it can be a tool to subtly turn the audience's attention to a different topic, buy the respondent some time, and discuss issues that advance the speaker's agenda. This can be a valuable skill not only to a politician, but in any debate. In addition to his education, Cameron had nine years to make use of his debating skills as an MP before becoming Prime Minister. It is impossible for a researcher to know whether a particular evasive response has been calculated and intentional, or more immediate and involuntary. Nonetheless, when the respondent in question is someone well trained in debating, it is easy to believe that the evasive responses are consciously given.

The political events leading to the referendum on June 23rd, 2016 set Cameron in a challenging position. Cameron had stated in 2013 that if a Conservative government is elected in 2015, he promises that there will be a referendum on the EU membership of the United Kingdom. Eventually the Conservative party did win the 2015 elections, and the European Union Referendum act was introduced to the parliament. Cameron himself was against withdrawing from the EU, and took a strategic risk promising the referendum should his party win the election. Many say that the chain of events happened unexpectedly and unintendedly, while others think Cameron knew exactly what the consequences of his promise would be (Rentoul, 2016). Nevertheless, the country voted for Britain to leave the EU, and Cameron gave his resignation the following day. This political event of the referendum and the events leading up to it could thus be seen as some of the most important ones to Cameron's career, which creates an interesting context for a study of evasion.

## 2.2 Linguistic background

### 2.2.1 *Politeness*

Generally speaking, a polite person is expected to be considerate towards other people's feelings and not to intentionally put them in an uncomfortable situation. Politeness is conveyed through several different linguistic means, and different sociolinguistic settings have their own norms for polite interaction. Following these

norms is important, as impoliteness towards a conversational partner can damage the relationship and complicate further interaction. Failing to be polite can get others to view us negatively, which in most social situations is not a desirable outcome.

A conversation is a cooperative effort. When two or more people are having a conversation, the participants generally have a shared understanding of a purpose or a direction for the conversation. Where there is a shared understanding of a conversation's purpose, there is also a shared understanding of conversational moves that would be considered unsuitable at each given stage. Each participant should therefore aim to make their contribution to the conversation a suitable one, given the conversation's stage and purpose. This is what Paul Grice called the 'Cooperative Principle' (Grice, 1975). Grice defined different maxims that will help a speaker to follow the principle in their conversational moves. These maxims can be divided into four categories: quantity of information, quality of information, relation of the information to the current topic of discussion, and the manner of presenting the information.

According to Grice's theory, to follow the Cooperative Principle a conversational contribution should be as informative as is required in the given exchange, but not more than that. The speaker should not say what they believe to be false, or anything for which they lack adequate evidence. The contribution should be relevant to the stage and topic of the conversation, and finally, the contribution should not be obscure in expression, nor ambiguous, but should be brief and orderly (Grice, 1975:45–46). The maxims of this principle can remain unfulfilled in many ways. A speaker could violate the maxims by intentionally misleading the listener, or they might overtly opt out by indicating that they do not want to cooperate in the way that is required. The speaker might face a clash of maxims where they cannot fulfil one maxim without violating another, or they might flout the maxims by intentionally leaving some maxims unfulfilled to imply a "hidden meaning" through practices like sarcasm (1975:46). To achieve conversational politeness, one should then aim to follow the Cooperative Principle. In addition to respecting the maxims, one should not force another participant in a situation where they are, for one reason or another, unable to fulfil the maxims and follow the Cooperative Principle.

Evasive responses generally fail to fulfil one or several of the maxims of quantity, relation, and/or manner. This can potentially cause the respondent to appear disrespectful and impolite towards the questioner. In a political setting, this kind of

behaviour could damage a politician's public self-image. Nonetheless, if answering the question would cause more damage to a politician's image than evading it, an evasive response might be an easy way out of the uncomfortable situation. It is important to take into consideration that evasive responses are not only a tool to dodge uncomfortable situations but can be damaging to one's self-image as well. If a politician repeatedly evades questions presented to them, it will become challenging for them to gain the trust of the public.

In sociolinguistics, one's public self-image is often called one's face. This term was made generally known by Ervin Goffman (Goffman, 1967), and further developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (Brown & Levinson, 1987/2006). Brown & Levinson developed a model generally known as politeness theory. According to the theory all adult members of a society have a face that can be "lost, maintained or enhanced" (1987/2006:311). The face has two sides: the negative face, which is an individual's basic claim of personal boundaries and independence, physical as well as emotional, and the positive face, which is the desire and need to connect with other individuals and to have their approval (1987/2006:311–312). The two sides of the face can be threatened by other people; threats to one's negative face jeopardise one's right of self-determination, while threats to one's positive face evaluate an aspect of one's public self-image negatively. This can be done for instance through disapproval, criticism, or indifference towards the individual. To combine the face theory with the politeness theory discussed above, politeness towards someone is essentially recognising that one's behaviour might be threatening to the other person's face. Through different ways of conveying politeness, one can then try "to counteract the potential face damage" (1987/2006:317).

### 2.2.2 *Evasion*

Evasion or equivocal speech in political context has been the subject of satire and comedy for a long time. As evasion used by politicians is such a commonly known feature, it has attracted the interest of not only comedians, but many researchers as well. In 1991 Sandra Harris wrote an article on evasion used by British politicians in political interviews, where she concluded that yes, there is evidence that politicians widely tend to equivocate in political interviews (1991:92).

Harris analysed 17 political interviews with different politicians from 1984 to 1987, recorded for both television and radio. She found that 39% of the responses were direct, and the rest indirect or evasive (1991:95). Harris's framework was one of the first frameworks for studying evasion in political context. The framework used in this study is slightly different from Harris's, as Harris concentrated on direct answers, and analysed indirect answers as one form of equivocation. Her method was to organise the responses on a scale into three categories: replies that challenge the question, indirect responses, and direct answers (Harris, 1991:93–94). Rasiah's framework, in turn, classifies indirect answers together with direct answers, separate from evasive responses.

In addition to Harris's work, in the context of British politics, a great deal of research on equivocal speech has been done by the social psychologist Peter Bull. In 2000 Bull analysed the former Prime Minister Tony Blair's use of equivocation in political interviews (Bull, 2000). Bull's material consisted of televised political interviews from the 1997 election campaign (2000:223). Bull concluded that Blair had a strong tendency to use equivocation when faced with a situation where a direct answer would be potentially damaging to Blair's political agenda (2000:234). When the question was not threatening to Blair's agenda, he generally answered the questions (2000:234). This study did not provide quantitative results that could be used to compare Blair's use of evasion to Cameron's, but Bull's work supports the hypothesis that politicians do tend to evade uncomfortable questions.

Evasion in political speech has not been studied only in the British context, but also in other cultures. For instance, Clementson and Eveland have studied evasion in North American context. They investigated how presidential candidates dodge questions in Presidential press conferences and debates (Clementson & Eveland, 2016). They studied the U.S. presidential press conference question-and-answer periods over the years of 2000–2014, as well as presidential debate question-and-answer sessions from 1996–2012. The study found that the candidates were more likely to overtly reject a question in press conferences, while preferring evasion through topical shifts during debates. This makes sense, as press conferences more than anything offer the candidate a chance to build their public image to the voters. Rejecting potentially damaging questions leaves more room for questions that are more beneficial to the candidate's image. As debates are also used to confront and

challenge the opponent, by shifting the topic to a more comfortable one in their answer the replying candidate could use it against the opponent, in their own favour.

Previous research on evasive responses has shown that the quality of the asked question will affect the level of evasion directly. Bavelas et al. (1990) used the terms avoidance-avoidance conflict and conflictual questions to describe the context of political interviews. According to them, politicians are often put in a situation where they are expected to give an answer to a question, but the question is set so that there are no possible positive replies to it. Evasive responses are then generally given to conflictual questions. In a political context the questions can often be quite hostile and challenging towards the respondent and his views. Evasive responses are a way for the politician to try to protect his public image, not only in the eyes of the public, but in the eyes of his party and opponents as well.

To analyse the psychological and social reasons behind evasion in political interviews, Peter Bull developed Brown & Levinson's concept of face further (Bull et al., 1996). His theory is that instead of just one face, politicians have three faces that they defend during interviews. These three faces are their own personal face as defined by Brown & Levinson, the face of their party, and a face in relation to supporting or not supporting significant others. Bull suggests that maintaining these three faces is the most important factor in determining whether or not a politician replies to a question. If the politician finds one of their faces threatened by the question, they will most likely answer indirectly or not answer by evading, ignoring, or rejecting the question (1996:267). This has to be done carefully, because as stated before, responses that are too obviously evasive can be face-threatening to the respondent as well. Bull's work concentrated mainly on evasion in political interviews, but this theory can be and indeed has been applied to parliamentary context as well.

Even though most studies on evasion concentrate on discourse outside the parliamentary context, other aspects of politeness in parliamentary discourse and more specifically PMQs have been researched. Harris and Bull have both studied Prime Minister's Questions in the British Parliament from the viewpoint of adversarial discourse. Harris studied politeness and impoliteness in PMQs to investigate how politeness theory can be extended to a parliamentary context and to study face-threatening and face-enhancing exchanges closer in this context (Harris, 2001). Harris concluded that the setting of PMQs is quite unique, as negative

politeness, or the avoidance of impoliteness, co-exists with deliberate impoliteness (2001: 463). The questions and answers are asked and given through the Speaker in a manner that conveys negative politeness, but especially between members of opposing parties the exchanges are often openly and intentionally face-threatening (2001: 464). This feature clearly differentiates PMQs from other sociolinguistic settings, where face-threats are generally avoided. Bull and Wells's study had similar discoveries to Harris's; they concluded that Brown and Levinson's theory of face-threatening acts (FTAs) could not be applied to the context of PMQs as it is (Bull & Wells, 2012:45). The most important presupposition behind Brown and Levinson's theory is that the participants of a conversation try to avoid threats to the face of their conversational partner, and this is what is generally understood as politeness. In the context of PMQs, however, "not only are FTAs not avoided, face threats are intentionally intensified" (2012:45).

All in all, evasive responses in the context of parliamentary discourse and Question Time have been left quite under-researched. As mentioned, most studies on evasion investigate the context of political interviews. Sociolinguistic studies on Question Time, on the other hand, have investigated other aspects of discourse, such as the adversarial nature of the sessions, but not evasion itself. Rasiah's dissertation seems to be one of the few studies that concentrate solely on evasion in parliamentary discourse, and especially Prime Minister's question time. The setting is quite different from political interviews; thus, this context needs to be studied separately.

### 3 Material and methods

#### 3.1 The Corpus

The speeches held in the British Parliament have been archived for over two centuries. Digitalised versions of the speeches are freely available to the public through the *Hansard Online* archive maintained by Parliament. The speeches from 1805–2005 can be found from an annotated corpus, but the more recent ones are only available on Parliament's Hansard Online archive as complete unannotated transcripts. The complete transcripts work well for the purposes of this study; evasion cannot be studied through annotations, and it is important to have access to



the full text to understand the context and to be able to evaluate the level of evasion used. The PMQ sessions are also recorded on video and the videos are available on Hansard Online. It would be interesting to combine analysis of video material with the textual analysis of the transcripts of the appropriate question–answer pairs. Spoken context might reveal details that have been left out from the transcript. Nevertheless, as the chosen framework has been created for written transcripts and does not take into account other forms of communication apart from speech (such as body language), these could not be included in the analysis unless the framework is adapted. Hence, for the purposes of this study I will concentrate only on the transcribed text versions of the records.

The data for this study is collected from PMQ sessions from the beginning of 2016 to the last PMQ session David Cameron attended as a Prime Minister on July 13<sup>th</sup>. This time period was chosen as this was the most turbulent time regarding the particular topic this study concentrates on. A larger time span would result in too much data to analyse in the planned manner, as each speech has to be closely read, analysed, and evaluated separately. Originally the plan was to search through each PMQ transcripts from January 2016 to mid-July 2016 with a simple word search for keywords such as *European Parliament*, *EU*, and *referendum*. However, as it turned out this method was not quite sufficient. There were several cases of relevant questions that did not contain such keywords, but speakers referred to the referendum in other ways, such as “the United Kingdom facing its most momentous decision for a generation in eight weeks’ time” (HC Eng 27 April 2016, vol 608, col 1427). As a result, the only way to find all relevant question–answer pairs was through close reading. There are altogether 19 sessions in this chosen time span where questions regarding the referendum and Britain’s possible withdrawal from the Union were discussed. Each of the 19 sessions had at least one question regarding these the relevant topics, and most had several.

In the PMQs over the time period of 20 January 2016 – 13 July 2016 there were 112 question–answer pairs relevant to this study. A pair was considered relevant if the question somehow discussed Britain’s EU membership or the referendum on it, and the respondent was David Cameron. Questions that did not discuss the defined topic were left out from the analysis. The PMQ of 25 May 2016 was left out of the data set as well, because Cameron was absent at the time and the

respondent in his stead was The First Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr George Osborne.

During the close reading I found several question–answer pairs where the European Union, the referendum, or other relevant topics were discussed in the answer, but not the question. David Cameron would bring these topics up in his response, even though the question did not relate to them in any way. This was usually done to highlight the benefits of the membership or to urge people to vote “remain.” I chose to exclude these instances from the data set, because the initial aim of this study is to analyse evasive responses to questions relating to these topics. If Cameron brings the referendum up when answering an unrelated question, the response is definitely a case of strong agenda shift. These kinds of cases are nonetheless not relevant for this particular study and including them in the data set would shift the focal point of the study entirely.

### 3.2 Framework

As mentioned in section 1, the framework for this study was borrowed from Parameswary Rasiah’s paper “A Framework for the systematic analysis of evasion in parliamentary discourse,” from 2009. Rasiah created the framework particularly for the study of evasion in parliamentary context, as evasion has been studied to a great extent in different political contexts outside the parliamentary setting. The reason for choosing this particular framework was partly the lack of research of parliamentary evasion, but also to test the framework with a different data set. The basis of the framework is formed by studies of evasion in political context, as well as studies on questions and responses. To study evasion in a question–answer context, it is crucial to make clear the defining features of questions and answers. What kind of questions are there, and what counts as a question? What kind of a reply can be considered an answer, and how do we define whether an answer was given to the asked question?

Questions can be split into three categories: open questions, which use an interrogative form such as “what” or “why” (called Wh-questions by Rasiah), closed questions, which can be answered by a “yes” or “no,” and disjunctive questions, which expect a choice between two or more options presented by the questioner. Open questions give the respondent most room to explain their point of view, give additional information, and indeed evade the question while still giving the

impression that the question has been answered. Closed questions generally require a short, direct answer, which cannot so easily be evaded covertly. These questions also set certain presuppositions that the respondent might have to either accept or reject to some extent, because they will have to give a “yes” or “no” answer, even with further clarification. Disjunctive questions tend to be the most restrictive out of the three types, as the options given in the question can all be uncomfortable and face-threatening for the respondent to choose.

To analyse the responses in the context of study of evasion in a parliamentary setting, a reply, or a response, can be defined as a speech act performed by the respondent as a reaction to a question they have been asked. An answer is a reply that fills the presupposition of the question, that is, answers the question. For a closed yes/no question any response that can be positioned on a continuum from positive certainty to negative certainty can be considered an answer (Rasiah, 2009: 666). Open questions usually expect a variable of some kind, for instance “where” expects a place, “when” expects a time, and “why” expects a reason. If the reply contains a variable which fits the expectations of the question, the reply can then be considered to answer the question. Disjunctive questions give the respondent two or more options to choose from, and the respondent is expected to choose one of the options. If the respondent does not make a choice at all or chooses an option that was not given to them, the question remains unanswered. The study of evasion concentrates on replies that do not fill the presuppositions of the question. Any reply that does not meet the expectations set by the question will be considered an evasive reply. Situations where the respondent does not give any reply to a posed question are of interest as well, as ignoring a question, especially in a context of PMQs heavily violates the conversational maxims of the exchange.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, the quality of the question affects the level of evasion in the response. Notwithstanding the proof of this shown by previous studies, Rasiah’s framework as presented in the 2009 publication does not investigate the questions any closer than dividing them into different categories. The pilot study Rasiah had published with the framework did not present numerical results from quantitative analysis of the question types, and there was no deeper qualitative analysis of the questions that were asked. In this study I will investigate the different question types closer and further than Rasiah had in her pilot study. As stated above, a conflictual question is more likely to be evaded than a question that does not

threaten the respondent's face. Previous research on PMQs concluded that conflictual questions are a core feature to Prime Minister's Questions (Harris 2001, Bull & Wells 2012). The research background presented in Section 2 thus supports the idea that a closer analysis of the asked questions is essential for a thorough study of evasive responses. For the purposes of this study, I will therefore extend the framework in regard to the asked questions. I will not only compare the frequencies of the different question types, but also investigate how the evasive responses were divided between the different types of questions and perform a developmental analysis to see whether there were any notable trends in the questions over the chosen time line.

Another qualitative aspect of the questions I was interested in was their face-threatening properties. I wanted to investigate how many of the questions were face-threatening to Cameron, and how this compared to the evasive responses. Unfortunately, this kind of close-reading would not be possible with a data set as large as I have, if I am to not extend the scope of this study too far. As an alternative option I chose to analyse the attitude of the questions. Since the topic of EU membership is quite polarised, I decided to categorise each question based on its attitude towards the EU. Ultimately, each British citizen eligible to vote, including Members of Parliament, had to choose between three options regarding the EU membership: leave, remain, or abstain. Cameron wanted United Kingdom to remain in the European Union, and a simple, straight-forward hypothesis would be that questions that were openly against Cameron's views would be face-threatening and could consequently result in an evasion. However, considering the political situation in the House of Commons at the time, it seems clear that Cameron would not only evade questions that are EU-negative. Several MPs were eager to challenge Cameron, despite wanting to remain in the European Union. There were MPs in both Government and the Opposition who wanted Britain to remain in the EU, and the division between the campaigns was not clearly cut between different parties. Cameron could then well face questions that were EU-positive, but face-threatening. Ergo, I do not expect a strong correlation between evasion and attitude of the question, but it will be interesting to see whether there is a pattern.

### 3.3 Methodology

In this section I will explain in more detail how the framework was used to analyse the chosen data set. Rasiah's method involves close-reading of all appropriate pairs of questions and answers from the chosen timeline and categorising them based on the nature of the question and the level of evading techniques used by the respondent. Figure 1 presents Rasiah's framework as a graph.

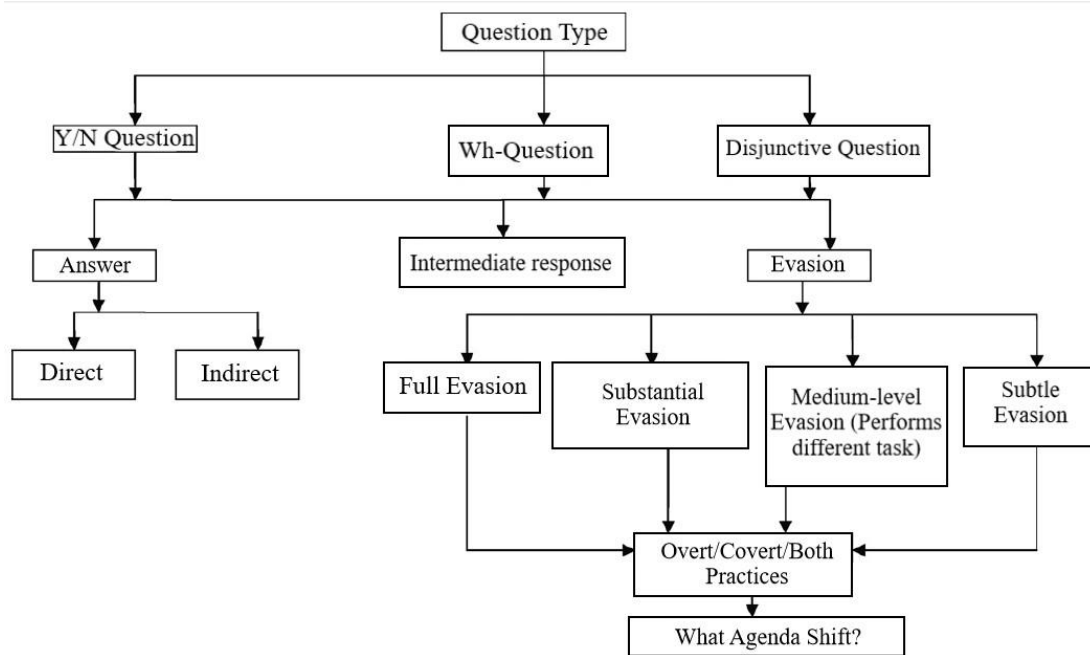


Figure 1: The Framework as presented by Rasiah (Rasiah, 2009:667)

The graph shows the process of analysing each question–answer pair, starting with the question type and ending in the agenda shift of an evaded question. Categorising the questions and responses this way allows the researcher to not only evaluate the use of evasion qualitatively, but also to use quantitative methods on the data. Quantitative methods will help draw conclusions on the extent of the use of evasion by the study subject, which is ultimately the main interest of this study. To recapitulate the process of analysis, I searched for appropriate question–response pairs through close-reading from the chosen dataset. I then categorised the questions and responses according to the modified framework, and after the categorisation was done, I presented the results and drew conclusions on to what extent did Cameron evade the questions he was asked.

### 3.3.1 *Question categories*

Every question was analysed and categorised under one of the three question categories defined by the framework: Closed Questions, Open Questions, and Disjunctive Questions. This categorisation was done to keep track of what kinds of questions were evaded, and whether there was a great difference in the frequency and level of evasion between the different question categories. As mentioned in Section 3.2, Rasiah did not give detailed quantitative analysis on the different types of questions found in her data in the pilot study. She did analyse the questions further in her dissertation but did not include that information in the 2009 publication. I chose to give exact numbers for all three categories, as I was interested in the analytics and comparisons between types of questions and types of responses.

Even though thorough analysis of face-threats in the questions was not possible for this study, the framework could be extended with an analysis of attitude. MPs avidly used their floor to promote the campaign they supported, and the questions were generally very clearly either positive, negative, or neutral towards the membership. Hence, I decided to include in the analysis of the questions a labelling based on the question's attitude towards the European Union. The analytics and comparisons between questions of different attitudes would be interesting when forming an overview of the kinds of questions Cameron was asked. To analyse the attitude each question was labelled as positive, negative, or neutral towards the EU. This analysis did not take into account the questioner's stance on the matter, only whether the question itself showed any attitude towards the European Union and United Kingdom's membership in the union. I intentionally chose to ignore any remarks made by the questioner before the actual question that showed a different attitude than the question did, to grasp what kind of attitudes Cameron was truly responding to.

### 3.3.2 *Response categories*

Like the questions, the responses were categorised into different types as well. There would be three main categories of responses, and the third category, which was Evasion, would have its own subcategories. In this section I will present the different response categories and types. The purpose of different categories and sub-categories

was to make it easier to identify the different types of responses, and to analyse the different levels of evasion presented by the framework.

The first category was called *Answers*. As stated in the section 3.2 above, a question has been answered when the response fills the presuppositions of the question. This could be done in two ways, directly or indirectly. Direct questions explicitly answer the question and leave no aspects of the question unanswered. Indirect questions contain the same information as direct answers, but the information is provided implicitly. For instance, a closed question could be answered indirectly so that the reply does not contain the words “yes” or “no,” but would still give a satisfactory response to the question.

The responses categorised under the second category, *Intermediate responses*, were replies that commented on the question itself. This might have been correcting the presuppositions of the question or commenting on another aspect of the question than the actual focus of it. The respondent might have challenged the question’s illocutionary force, for instance by refusing to answer a hypothetical question by pointing out that the proposed situation has not occurred. Another example of an intermediate response would be refusal to answer on the grounds of liability, confidentiality, security reasons, and so forth. This kind of an intermediate response could be differentiated from evasion if it became clear that the respondent was willing to answer the question but was for some reason unable to do so at that moment. I anticipated this to be difficult to categorise, but each case would have to be evaluated individually.

The third response category was *Evasive responses*. Responses that fell under this category would be analysed further between four different sub-categories, or levels of evasion. Moreover, the evasive responses would be inspected closer to see whether the evasion was performed overtly or covertly, and whether the respondent used evasion as a tool to shift the agenda. Out of the different levels of evasion, *full evasion* is the strongest kind of evasion. Full evasion means evading the question completely, so that the question is neither answered nor acknowledged. What is important to note is that consequently, overtly rejecting the question will not be considered as full evasion. If full evasion is performed, the question is completely ignored by the respondent and as a result there is no response to analyse further.

The strongest kind of evasion where a response is given is called *substantial evasion*. This type involves a significant change in topic and the response moves to

an entirely different field. A response is given, the question is acknowledged, but the response does not relate to the question in any way. This is difficult to do covertly and would be obvious to the listener. Rasiah found no clear cases of this kind of evasion in her study. This type was then hypothesised as the rarest out of the four types. The next level of evasion is *medium level evasion*. Here the parameters of the question's topic remain, but the reply performs an entirely different task from what was requested and expected. This is the strongest case of evasion where the topic field set by the questioner remains. The respondent might perform medium level evasion on an uncomfortable question by discussing a more comfortable aspect of the topic than the one proposed by the questioner. The mildest level of evasion is called *subtle evasion*. This type of evasion was performed when the terms of the question were changed by the respondent so slightly it appeared the question had been answered, when in fact it had not. In Rasiah's example the questioner asked whether "all necessary steps" have been taken, and the Australian Prime Minister replied that "unprecedented steps have been taken." This was categorised as subtle evasion, as the PM did not confirm or reject that "all necessary steps" would have been taken.

After the right level of evasion was defined, each found case was be labelled either as overt or covert evasion. *Overt evasion* happens in situation where the respondent makes clear they are saying something that does not reply the question directly. For instance, the respondent could perform a token request for permission, where they appeared to be asking for permission for a topic shift without actually waiting for such permission to be granted. This kind of speech acts could begin with "can I bring up," for instance. Another way to overtly evade a question is minimising divergence. The respondent could downplay the departure from the agenda with an utterance such as "I will quickly point out," which makes the evasion seem less marked. The respondent could also justify the shift by pointing out that the unrequested additional information and topic shift is very important for the questioner to hear. In contrast to overt evasion, *covert evasion* is by definition difficult for the listener to notice. These were the type of replies where the questioner might have truly thought that the question had been answered, when in fact it had not. The respondent could achieve this through repeating the keywords of the question in the response, leading the listener to think an answer had been given. The response could be given in a very vague manner with non-specific terms. The



respondent could “operate” on the question by modifying and paraphrasing it as a part of his response.

*Agenda shifts* are often used in political context, as the aim of a politician is to always advance his own political agenda. The respondent might want to make a political point and evade the question by attacking the questioner, opposition, or other rival group. They might try to present a policy or talk up the respondent’s own side; in Rasiah’s study 13 of 27 questions asked in February 2003 received a response that shifted the agenda to portraying the Government in positive light (2009:674). Another type of agenda shift defined by Rasiah was the situation where the respondent points out that the question has already been answered. The category of this kind of reply depends on the answer that is being referred to. If the answer had indeed been given very recently, the answer was easily accessible to the listeners, or the respondent then rephrased the answer, this would be defined as an intermediate response. If, however, it was unclear whether the question had indeed been answered, the answer had not been given recently, or the listeners could not access the answer easily, the response would be an evasion with an agenda shift.

## 4 Analysis of results

### 4.1 Questions

For the majority of the questions the type was straightforward to define. Due to the special linguistic context defined by the parliamentary setting, the extreme use of indicators of politeness could to some extent cover the true type of the question.

Quote 1 is an example of such a question:

(1) Helen Goodman (Bishop Auckland) (Lab):

[...] Will the Prime Minister tell the House the worst argument that he has heard from the Brexiters?

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, col 919)

Here an open question (‘What is the worst argument the Prime Minister has heard from the Brexiters?’) was embedded within a closed question (‘Will the Prime Minister tell the House...?’) to indicate politeness. It seems that as Goodman considered the closed question alone to be too threatening to Cameron’s negative face, she showed politeness by building a conditional setting around the question.

This question was labelled as an open question, as it is the core question here that the questioner assumedly was expecting an answer to. Softening a request with a conditional setting is a common way to convey politeness, and it can be generally understood that the “real question” is set inside the conditional phrase. This is the question that Goodman expects a response to. According to Paul Grice’s cooperative principle, as discussed in section 2.2.1 above, the conversational maxim of quantity would not be fulfilled if the respondent would answer a question such as the one in Quote 1 with a simple “yes.” Rasiah also pointed out this common feature of parliamentary discourse in her study: “The overwhelming majority of Government questions were single Wh-questions beginning with the yes/no question structure [...] Questions using such structures show deference to the respondent.” (2009:668)

There was one question in the data set that stood out of the rest of the questions and was quite challenging to categorise. This particular question was set out in the form of a closed question, but was in fact a request to reiterate an earlier statement:

(2) Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con):

[...] Will the Prime Minister reiterate the commitment he has given this morning to do everything in his power to eradicate that evil hatred, and reiterate that leaving the EU should not be used to breed racism but, in fact, the opposite—it should provide us with an opportunity to be much more international rather than just European?

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 296)

What Donelan asks here is for the Prime Minister to repeat something he had earlier said. Even though the question is set in a closed form with the initial question “will the Prime Minister [...]”, the question does not fit the category of closed questions. Answering this question with a simple “yes” or “no” would not be considered a sufficient answer. The core problem with this case is how to categorise a question that requests an act, e.g. “could you repeat?” One option would be to modify the framework and add a new question category to it. Another option would be to simply interpret the question as an open question. Essentially this question asks what was the commitment that Cameron had given the same morning on the topic that Donelan had brought up. To answer directly an open question like this, the respondent would then have to give an answer that includes a summarisation or

repetition of the given commitment. The outcome and aim of this interpreted question would then be very similar to the question that was asked. Therefore, I chose to categorise this question as an open question, instead of modifying the framework.

Table 1 below shows the distribution between the different question types and shows how many evaded questions there were within each question type. The percentage tells what portion of the questions received an evasive response.

*Table 1: The question types*

Question type	N	Evaded	Evasion %
Closed question	78	30	38.5%
Open question	28	15	53.6%
Disjunctive question	6	5	83.3%
<b>Total</b>	112	50	44.6%

The most common question type was closed questions, with 78 questions out of 112. Less than 40% of the closed questions were evaded by the respondent. It is worth pointing out that as mentioned in the previous paragraph, in Rasiah's data set the most common question type was open question beginning with a closed question structure (2009: 668). As Rasiah did not present detailed quantitative results of the analysis of different question types, it is not possible to do a precise comparison between the two data sets. Notwithstanding the lack of exact figures, it is clear that the data sets differ quite remarkably here. In this data set I found a recurring pattern of the questioners asking the PM whether he agrees on a point presented by the questioner. This type of a question was repeated by different members of Parliament throughout the data set. The questioner would generally set the question with a lengthy description of the situation and issue on hand and finish his statement with a question of whether the PM agrees that the presented issue is indeed important and/or requires the actions proposed by the questioner. Setting the question this way could be an attempt to guide the response to a specific direction and to advance the speaker's agenda by getting the PM to agree (or indeed disagree) with him on the matter in front of Parliament and the public following the session. These kinds of questions also give the respondent less room for subtle evasion. This might explain the popularity of this question type in this context.

The second-most common question type was open questions, with 28 occurrences in the data set. Many of these were disguised as what seemed a closed question, in the way described above and in Example 1. Fifteen of the open questions were evaded by the respondent. However, it is important to note that in this data set many of the open questions were additional questions following immediately after a closed question. Often these kinds of additional questions were not answered or recognised by the respondent and were thus categorised under full evasion. Whether the respondent ignored the questions because they were uncomfortable for him to answer, it is challenging to say. It could simply be that by the time the questioner asked the open follow-up question, the respondent was still concentrated on the first question asked by the questioner and the following question was then left unnoticed by the respondent. It is worth mentioning that it is more challenging for the questioner to guide the response to a certain direction with an open question. With a closed question the respondent has two directions they can take, or they can evade the question. An open question gives the respondent much more freedom in this sense. The response could take an unexpected turn, which might not be favourable to the questioner or the issue they have presented. This could explain the reason why open questions were not as popular in this data set as closed questions.

There were six instances of disjunctive questions in the data set. Only one of these six questions was answered by Cameron. In the answered question Labour MP Ben Bradshaw gave the Prime Minister two options, and the Prime Minister overtly chose one of the given options in his response:

(3) Mr Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab):

With the United Kingdom facing its most momentous decision for a generation in eight weeks' time, does the Prime Minister think it makes more sense to listen to all our closest friends and allies around the world, or to a combination of French fascists, Nigel Farage and Vladimir Putin?

Cameron: [...] I think we should listen to our friends and our allies. Looking around the world, it is hard to find the leader of a country who wishes us well who wants us to do other than stay inside a reformed European Union.

(HC Eng 27 April 2016, vol 608, col 1427)

All other cases of disjunctive questions were evaded by Cameron. Cameron either did not choose one or the other of the given options, or he simply stated that he would not choose one of the options, without clarifying whether he would then choose the other. This number of evaded questions within one question type, compared to the number of answered questions within the same type, clearly stands out from the data set. Out of the three question types, disjunctive questions give the respondent least room to respond. This type of a question gives the questioner the most control and can be very uncomfortable to the respondent to answer if the presuppositions set by the question are hostile towards the respondent's agenda. If the respondent does not want to choose either of the given options, his only way out of the situation is through evasion. Hence, this inherent nature of the question will inevitably affect the statistics. Due the nature of this question type it might also be considered as the least polite type out of the three, which might explain the low number of disjunctive questions in the data.

During closer analysis of the questions it became apparent that towards the referendum, many of the questions seemed to have a positive attitude towards the European Union. An increasing number of questions appeared to follow the pattern presented in the beginning of this section; the questioner would ask whether the Prime Minister agrees with the questioner regarding an issue the questioner had just presented. If the question and the issue presented were EU positive and did not threaten Cameron's faces, it was highly likely that Cameron would directly answer that he agrees. The number of questions from EU negative point of view did not seem to increase notably. For this reason, I decided to extend Rasiah's framework slightly on the topic of questions to investigate what their attitude towards the EU was. I chose to concentrate the analysis solely on the question itself and ignore any extra remarks by the questioner that did not directly relate to the question. There were cases where the question showed one type of attitude, but the other remarks before or after the question showed another type of attitude. For instance, the following question was labelled as neutral:

(4) Nigel Adams (Selby and Ainsty) (Con):

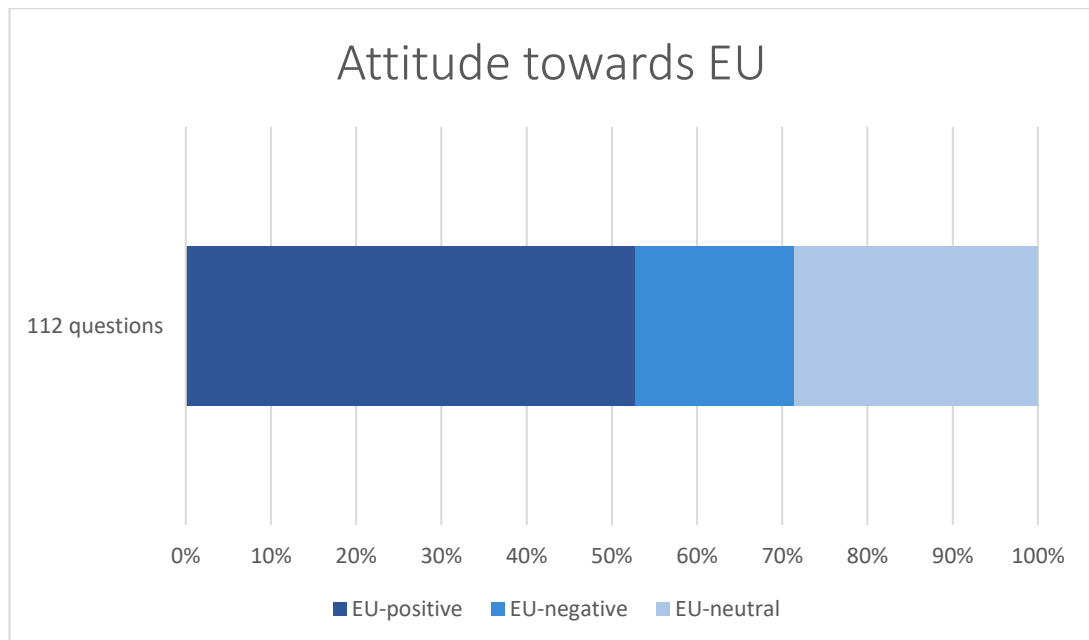
I congratulate my right hon. Friend on honouring our manifesto pledge and delivering this historic referendum. Unfortunately, however, we have heard some hysterical

scaremongering during the debate, and there are those in this House and the other place who believe that if the British people decide to leave the EU, there should be a second referendum. Will he assure the House and the country that, whatever the result on 24 June, his Government will carry out the wishes of the British people—if the vote is to remain, we remain, but if it is to leave, which I hope it is, we leave?

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1759)

Despite Adams's clearly negative attitude towards the European Union, the question itself is neutral. Adams asks if a "leave" vote truly means leaving the EU and "remain" truly means remaining in it. This received a direct answer from Cameron where he assured that the people's voice will be heard and listened to, and the decision on EU membership will be made based on the result of the vote.

Following this type of attitude analysis, I analysed all of the questions in the data set. As can be seen from Figure 2 below, most of the questions were positive in their attitude towards the European Union.



*Figure 2: Questions' attitude towards European Union*

Over half (59, 52.7%) of the questions were EU-positive, shown in darker colour in Figure 2. This is nearly three times the amount of EU-negative questions (21, 18.8%), shown in the middle of the bar above. This leaves 32 (28.6%) questions

that were neutral, shown in the lightest colour. This would suggest that the majority of the MPs were in favour of remaining in the EU and supported the “remain” campaign.

#### 4.2 Answers and intermediate responses

The responses were, unsurprisingly, more challenging to categorise than the questions. Most of Cameron’s responses were quite lengthy and shared features from several different categories. Yet, I was able to categorise all responses in the categories presented by in section 3.3.2 above; there were no responses that did not fit any of the defined categories. I will discuss some examples of responses that were challenging to categorise in the following sections. 101 of the 112 questions in the data set got a response from Cameron. If the question was not acknowledged at all, it was categorised as fully evaded.

*Table 2: The response types*

Response type	N	%
Direct answer	28	25
Indirect answer	29	25.9
Intermediate response	5	4.5
Evasion	50	44.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100</b>

57 of the 112 questions received a direct or indirect answer. This means that Cameron gave an answer to 50.9% of all the questions presented to him. These answers were quite evenly divided between direct answers (28) and indirect answers (29). In most of his responses the Prime Minister took some time to add other remarks concerning the topic on hand, lengthening them with opinions and points that were not requested in the question itself. Nevertheless, if the question was explicitly answered in the response, the response was still considered an answer. There were only two cases where Cameron responded a question with no extra remarks.

Intermediate responses were not very common in this data set; only five of the responses were categorised under this response type. This was also the most

challenging class to define, as there were no clear-cut cases of this type in this data set. In section 3.3.2 above I explained that intermediate responses are responses that comment on the question itself. It cannot be expected that a respondent answers a question that they do not find accurate or legitimate, or that they simply cannot answer due to security reasons or not having the required information. There was only one case where Cameron explicitly stated that he does not want to answer a question due to its nature (see Appendix: (lii)). There were no cases where he would have refused to answer based on security reasons or because he did not have the answer. Even detailed questions regarding time after the referendum either got an answer of some kind, or were evaded, even though on several occasions it would have been perfectly acceptable for Cameron to point out that he cannot answer a hypothetical question. A simple case of an intermediate response would be one where the respondent uses the incorrect presuppositions of the question as a reason not to give an answer. In this data set there was not a single clear case of this kind of an intermediate response. One example of a response which was categorised as intermediate is given in (5):

(5) Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con):

The Government have just presented three White Papers to Parliament under their self-imposed legal duty to provide information under the European Union Referendum Act 2015. The Minister for Europe, during proceedings between the two Houses, gave me an undertaking that the Government information under that Act would certainly, as he put it, be accurate and impartial. The three recent White Papers are not. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is the enforcer of the ministerial code, which demands that Ministers give accurate information to Parliament. Will he issue instructions to Foreign Office Ministers to review and correct those White Papers?

Cameron: First, let me say to my hon. Friend that we believe in the sovereignty of Parliament. Parliament dictated that those documents would be published, and that is why they are being published. On the question of their content, their



content has been prepared by civil servants under all the appropriate codes. If he does not agree with some of the content, I would say to him and to other colleagues: challenge the content. Have an argument about the content. Stop arguing about the process.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, col 275)

Here Cameron uses the floor to correct the presuppositions of the question; Cash claimed that the White Papers were not impartial and that they were not drawn following the ministerial code. Cameron assures that the papers were drawn “under all the appropriate codes” and suggests that Cash is blaming the process when actually it is the content that he should be questioning. This question was labelled as an intermediate response, because if Cameron would have answered the closed question, he would have had to accept the presupposition which he believed to be incorrect.

Even if Cameron did comment on the presuppositions of the question, he would still always in addition to that give some kind of a response. Oftentimes the additional response would be used to promote Cameron’s own agenda, and it would not relate directly to the question. Instead of declining the question, Cameron would use the incorrect presuppositions as a way to shift the agenda to one that was more comfortable for him. In consequence, on several occasions it was challenging to decipher whether the response was evasive or intermediate.

#### 4.3 Evasion

As can be seen from Table 3 below, in this data set there were 50 cases of evasion, most of them being subtle evasion or medium level evasion. Covert evasion techniques were more common than overt techniques.

*Table 3: The evasion types*

Evasion	N	Overt	Covert
Full evasion	11	-	-
Substantial evasion	1	0	1
Medium level evasion	19	7	12
Subtle evasion	19	10	9
<b>Total</b>	50	17	22

The rarest type is substantial evasion, of which there is only one case. There are 11 cases of full evasion, where the question was completely ignored by the respondent. The rest of the cases were evenly split between 19 cases of medium level evasion, and 19 cases of subtle evasion. As for overtiness of Cameron's evasive responses, there is a slight tendency for Cameron to prefer covert methods over overt methods. Naturally cases of full evasion were not analysed on their overtiness, as there were no responses to analyse for this category. 22 of the responses were covertly evasive, and 17 used overt techniques. Especially cases of medium level evasion were usually covertly done; covert methods were clearly more common in with this particular type compared to overt methods.

All of the 11 cases of full evasion were performed on questions that co-occurred with another question, so either before or after a question that did get a response from Cameron. This is understandable, as it would be very unusual for the PM to completely ignore a stand-alone question asked during PMQ. In many of the cases of full evasion the question was so closely related to the answered question that it could be considered to simply support the first question. It could be assumed that in some cases the questioner might not even expect an explicit response to the follow-up question. However, there were also cases where the questions were clearly meant for the PM to answer, but he did not. The fully evaded questions were often somewhat threatening to one of Cameron's faces. It was rare for a questioner to threaten Cameron's own face, but the faces of the Conservative Party and the Government were threatened quite often, as well as Cameron's face in relation to supporting or not supporting significant others. Instead of giving explicit responses to the face-threatening questions he would choose to respond to the entire address in either a defensive or a more conciliatory manner.

As mentioned earlier, substantial evasion involves a complete change in topic, and would be clear to the listener. It is not considered appropriate for a respondent to evade a question with a remarkable shift in the topic, especially in such a formal setting as a parliamentary session. Rasiah found no clear cases of this evasion type in her data. In my data set, however, there was one response which I categorised under substantial evasion:

(6) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

The Prime Minister's successor is very well known in Scotland at present—this is across all the front pages—because of the threat to deport the very much loved and liked Brain family from the highlands. The first vote of her premiership is likely to be on imposing Trident against the wishes of almost every single MP from Scotland. Meanwhile, she says that she plans to plough on with Brexit, regardless of the fact that Scotland voted to remain in the EU. How does the outgoing Prime Minister think that all that will go down in Scotland?

Cameron:

First of all, specifically on the Brain family, Mrs Brain came to this country on a tier 4 student visa to study for a Scottish history degree. She completed it and her husband and son came as dependants. We have given them an extension until 1 August to put in an application for a work visa in the normal way, and I very much hope that will happen. On Trident, there will be a vote in this House. It is right that this House should decide. Actually, many people in Scotland support our nuclear deterrent, maintaining it and the jobs that come in Scotland. **The right hon. Gentleman asks about the record of this Government when it comes to Scotland.** I will tell him what it is: 143,000 more people in work in Scotland; massive investment in the renewable industries in Scotland; the two biggest warships in our history built in Scotland; a powerhouse Parliament; a referendum that was legal, decisive and fair; and, I might add, a Scotsman winning Wimbledon

twice while I was Prime Minister. Never mind Indy 2; I think it is time for Andy 2.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, col 290)

Mr. Robertson asks Cameron how he thinks that Scottish people will react to the actions of his successor, Prime Minister Theresa May. Cameron first discusses the issues mentioned by the questioner, and then goes on to completely reformulate Robertson's question. Cameron operates on the question so that it turns into a completely different one. This reformulated question is shown in bolded script in the quote above. Cameron claims Robertson has asked him to list actions of the current Government that have had a positive influence on Scotland. The answer Cameron gives to his own question is not completely direct either. He lists tennis player Andrew Murray's Wimbledon victories as Government actions, when this is of course hardly the case. He ends his response in a pun; Andrew Murray is often referred to as Andy Murray, and a new referendum on Scotland's independence has been informally called IndyRef2 (Green, 2018). The new reformulated question and the answer Cameron gave to it did remain on the topic of Scotland, and even the European referendum was mentioned. Nevertheless, the topic shift was so remarkable and noticeable that I found there to be enough evidence to label this response as a case of substantial evasion, which makes it the only response in this category.

There were no other clear cases of substantial evasion in this data set. Yet, there was one response which was challenging to categorise between intermediate response, substantial evasion, and medium level evasion. Eventually it was categorised under medium level evasion:

(7) Charlotte Leslie (Bristol North West) (Con):

The EU's security is only as strong as its weakest border, so does the Prime Minister share my concerns not only over Chancellor Merkel's apparent legitimisation of President Erdogan's reservations about freedom of speech but crucially over her decision to liberalise restrictions on Turkish visas, given that that country has such a porous Syrian border and such booming identity fraud?

Cameron: First, it is certainly true that a country in the Schengen zone is only as strong as its weakest border—that is absolutely right—but we, of course, are not in the Schengen zone. Secondly, the Schengen zone has decided to offer visas to Turkish nationals, but we have not made that decision, and will not be making that decision. Let us remember, however, that a visa is not a right to go and live and work or reside; it is a right to visit, so let us also be clear that Turks with visas visiting Schengen countries do not have those rights or the right automatically to come to Britain. It is very important to get this clear.

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 916–917)

Cameron here indirectly points out that Leslie mixed EU and the Schengen zone up in her question, and that Britain has not decided to start offering visas to Turkish nationals and will not do so. These corrections make Cameron's address seem like an intermediate response. Yet, upon closer inspection it seems that Cameron is "correcting" something that was not in fact presupposed by the question. The original question was whether Cameron is concerned about the possibility of Merkel's actions having a negative effect on EU's security. Cameron's response is that the Schengen visas offered to Turkish nationals will not automatically allow entry to the UK. He did not mention Merkel, Erdogan, or security in the EU at large in any way. This response was categorised under medium level evasion because the topic shift was not great enough to necessarily be noticed by the listeners; the response still remained on the topic of visas to Turkish nationals. Nonetheless, this example shows how hazy the lines can be between different categories and how challenging it can be to categorise the responses in this way.

Including the response discussed above, there were 19 cases of medium level evasion in this data set. Most of the cases of medium level evasion were responses that dealt with a point that was made by the questioner but did not answer the actual question. It is interesting to note that an overwhelming majority of these evasive responses included a praise on the Government, Britain in general, or the EU. There were several occasions where Cameron responded a question in a way that praised Britain's EU membership and urged people to vote "remain":

(8) Mr Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con):

[...] Will my right hon. Friend explain, if the Government are so strapped for cash, why they remain intent on spending £50 billion on HS2?

Cameron: We will be strapped for cash, if we believe the Institute for Fiscal Studies or the National Institute of Economic and Social Research—both impeccably independent—who say that there would be a hole in our public finances of between £20 billion and £40 billion. You do not have to be an economic expert to see this: if the economy shrinks, and there are fewer jobs and lower wages, there will be less in tax receipts. If there is less in tax receipts, we will clearly need to make cuts, put up taxes or increase borrowing. It is a simple matter of mathematics. There is an easy way to avoid that situation—vote to stay in a reformed European Union next Thursday.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1760)

These kinds of evasions will be discussed in more depth in the section 4.3.1 below, but it is clear from the data that Cameron tends to use medium level evasion to advance his own or indeed the Government's agenda.

In this data set subtle evasion was used by Cameron 19 times altogether. This was again another challenging type to define. The general definition set by Rasiah (2009:670) was that subtle evasion is a response that makes it seem like the question has been answered, when it in fact has not. The inherent nature of this type is then that it is challenging to notice. The definition for this category is rather vague, and some of the responses in this category required very intensive close reading before they could be categorised. In most cases Cameron changed the terms of the question very slightly in his response. For instance, instead of stating his own opinion on a matter, he would describe it on a more general level. As with the other categories, for this type there were again several cases where the question was evaded to some extent, and Cameron's or the Government's agenda was advanced instead.

#### 4.3.1 Agenda shifts

In Table 4 below I have listed the number of evasive responses that performed an agenda shift, as well as given the number of agenda shifts for each level of evasion found in the data. I have also calculated the percentages of responses that performed an agenda shift out of the total amount of responses in each category. It is worth noting that the 11 cases of full evasion found from the data were left out of these calculations, as there were no responses to analyse for this category.

*Table 4: Agenda shifts*

Evasion type	Agenda shifts	Total	% of total
Substantial evasion	1	1	100%
Medium level evasion	17	19	89.5%
Subtle evasion	11	19	57.9%
<b>Total</b>	29	39	74.4%

As hypothesised earlier, there was a great number of agenda shifts throughout the data set. In total, 29 of the evasive responses shifted the agenda; this is approximately 74% of the 39 evasive responses found. What is interesting to notice is that the higher the level of evasion, the more likely it is to be used for shifting the agenda. It is safe to assume that the higher the level of evasion, the more face-threatening the question had been. Therefore, it is understandable that Cameron would try to shift the topic to a more beneficial one to the faces he is trying to protect and promote.

No matter whether the question was hostile towards the government or not, remarkably often Cameron was able to talk up his own side. He would shift the agenda in his answer to portray the Government in a positive light. The same applies for questions about the EU membership. One of such cases is presented in Example (9):

(9) Anne Marie Morris (Newton Abbot) (Con):

It is much to the Government's credit that more than 2 million jobs have been created since 2010, but nearly 1 million of those have gone to non-UK EU nationals. Does the Prime Minister agree that the EU's free movement of people is damaging the employment prospects of UK nationals and

has contributed to the 1.6 million British people who remain unemployed? That has not been compensated for by an equivalent level of jobs for UK nationals in other European countries.

Cameron: If my hon. Friend looks at the figures for the last five years, she will see that two thirds of the rise in employment has been from jobs going to British people. Where I agree with her is that, with the welfare reform that we have introduced for EU citizens and the tougher control of migration from outside the EU, we should see welfare reform in the UK as the flipside of migration control. We want to ensure that it always pays for British people to train up and do the jobs that are being made available, and we should see immigration control and welfare reform, together with a growing economy, as a way of getting more of our people into work.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, cols 271–272)

Here Cameron seems to be correcting the presupposition of the question by commenting on the numbers used by Morris to prove her point. When the response is read more carefully, it becomes apparent that he does not actually correct the numbers and there is no reason for Cameron to question the illocutionary force of the question. What Cameron does is simply discusses the proportions from a different point of view. This response was analysed as a medium level evasion, as Cameron talks about issues relating to the topic without actually discussing the question of whether employment of non-UK EU nationals damages the employment prospects of UK-nationals. Cameron also performs an agenda shift here. Cameron's response never reveals whether he agrees with Morris's statement or not. Instead he takes a presupposition of the question – that migration control means more jobs – and uses it to highlight Government's actions in positive light instead.

It becomes clear throughout the data set that Cameron is very keen to protect the face of his party and the Government, but that he is also extremely unwilling to show a member of his own party in bad light. Cameron's absurd response to Robertson's question about Theresa May in Example (6) displays well the lengths Cameron is willing to go to avoid discussing a member of his party in a



negative context. He is clearly protecting the face of his party and the face of the Government, even when it requires a potential sacrifice of his own face. Giving such a serious question such a strongly evasive response that ends in a joke could be quite damaging to Cameron's face. What is important to note here is that even though Robertson has two questions for one PMQ session as he is the leader of the SNP, this particular question was his second one. Thus, he could not have damaged Cameron's face further by confronting Cameron about the fact that his question was never answered. Cameron was undoubtedly aware of this, which might have encouraged him to give such a response to the question.

Cameron did not often use his evasive responses to attack the opposing side, questioner, or other rival group. Most of his agenda shifting responses, albeit evasive, were more conciliatory or defensive than hostile. There were only two attacks found from the data set, and they were both directed towards the "leave" campaign. The first response considered an attack was to Conservative MP Jacob Reese-Mogg's EU-negative question, the attack marked with bolded script in Example (10):

(10) Mr Jacob Reese-Mogg (North East Somerset) (Con):

Over 200,000 economic migrants came from the European Union in the period for which we have figures. Yet the propaganda sheet sent out to the British people claims that we maintain control of our borders. Have we withdrawn from the free movement of people, or is that sheet simply untrue?

Cameron: The truth is this: economic migrants who come to the European Union do not have the right to come to the UK. They are not European nationals. They are nationals of Pakistan, or Morocco, or Turkey. None of those people has that right. That is very important—and frankly that is why it is important that we send information to households: so that they can see the truth about what is proposed. **What my hon. Friend has just put forward is a classic scare story.** Britain has borders. Britain will keep its borders. We have got the best of both worlds.

(HC Eng 13 April 2016, vol 608, cols 352–353)

Mr. Reese-Mogg argues that the claim of Britain keeping its borders is “propaganda,” which is a threatening statement to Cameron’s faces as the Prime Minister. The question is a disjunctive question which puts Cameron in an avoidance-avoidance conflict; he cannot choose either of the given options without severe face-damage. Cameron evades by choosing neither of the options. In his response Cameron stresses that the claim is true. He points out that Reese-Mogg is incorrect in his statement that the migrants have arrived from EU as part of the free movement of people within the Union. Finally, Cameron attacks the questioner by stating that the question presented a “scare-story.”

Another case of attack was to a question regarding Nigel Farage. In this response Cameron also stated that the question had already been answered; Rasiah defines this as one type of agenda shift, or an intermediate response, depending on the context. This particular case was analysed as an agenda shift. The exchange is shown in Example (11):

(11) Mr Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con):

May I take this opportunity to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for his premiership and for the many achievements of his Government, of which we can be proud? I also commend his condemnation of the vile racist attacks that have been reported from all over the country. Will he take this opportunity to condemn the ridiculous and revolting behaviour of a certain MEP in the European Parliament yesterday and make it clear that that MEP does not represent this country and he does not represent [...] [Interruption.] [...] I am grateful, Mr Speaker. That MEP does not represent this country and he does not represent even the vast majority of patriotic and law-abiding people who voted leave in the referendum.

Cameron: Let me thank my hon. Friend for his kind remarks and congratulate him on the role he played in the campaign. As for what MEPs and others have said, people should judge them by the remarks they make. I have made clear what I felt about Nigel Farage and that appalling poster in the campaign.

I think the motive was absolutely clear and everyone can see what he was trying to do.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 298–299)

Cameron's response was not analysed as an intermediate response, even though he seemed to state that his opinions on Farage are clear to everyone, and he gave a short rephrase after the statement. Jenkin asked about Cameron's opinion regarding a very specific event, not about Farage in general, and not about a poster of the "leave" campaign. The event Jenkin was referring to was Nigel Farage's speech in the European Parliament after the referendum on June 28<sup>th</sup>, in which Farage offended the other MEPs with statements such as "virtually none of you have never done a proper job in your lives" (Stone, 2016). Cameron evades the question regarding this event, and attacks Farage. The poster Cameron assumedly refers to was unveiled by Farage mid-June and was condemned widely as inciting racial hatred (Stewart & Mason, 2016).

Interestingly enough, Cameron would not only use evasion to perform agenda shifts. During analysis of the data it became clear that Cameron has a tendency to talk up his own side even when he does give an answer to the question. As mentioned in section 4.2, Cameron rarely gave an answer to a question without any additional remarks that were not requested by the questioner. There were several cases where he would give an answer, and then shift the topic completely from the questioner's issue to something that was beneficial to his own agenda. One common shift of this kind was urging people to vote "remain." Especially over the weeks right before the referendum day, Cameron would bring this up even when responding to questions that did not mention the referendum or EU in any way. Nonetheless, as mentioned before, these cases were not included in the data set.

#### 4.3.2 *Overt and covert evasion methods*

As mentioned before, covert methods were slightly more common among Cameron's evasive responses than overt methods. The aim of a covert evasion is generally to hide the shift and, as Rasiah puts it, for the politician to "get away with it" (2009:671). Overt practices on the other hand are generally used to emphasise politeness and minimise potential harm caused by the evasion (Rasiah, 2009:670). Whether this means that Cameron could then be defined as less polite and more

shrewd in his actions trying to cache the evasive acts can of course not be deciphered from such data. It is however worth pointing out that preferring covert practices means that the respondent does not want the questioner to catch them evading the question. This behaviour could be seen as more calculating than if the respondent would evade the question overtly.

The framework introduced by Rasiah identifies three types of overt evasion: token request for permission, justifying the shift and minimising the divergence. Cameron used methods from the two first types, but there were no clear cases of the last type, minimising the divergence. The most common method was justifying the shift. Often Cameron would comment that the questioner makes an important point, a point which he would then raise and elaborate on, while evading the question itself. Another way to do that which was rather common as well was for Cameron to say something like “The point I would make is...” (HC Eng 2 March 2016, vol 609, col 944). This again is a way to highlight the importance of the topic Cameron shifts to in his response.

For covert methods, the framework defines three different types: subversive word repeats and anaphoric references, operating on the question, and use of similar or vague and non-specific terms. Out of the three, Cameron’s preferred method was operating on the question, illustrated by (12):

(12) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

A strong majority voted for Scotland to remain in the European Union. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon is in Brussels today, where she is meeting the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament. Yesterday, there was a standing ovation in the European Parliament when the case was made to protect Scotland’s place in Europe. What will the UK Government do to protect Scotland’s place in Europe?

Cameron:

On the United Kingdom’s future and our relationship with the European Union, we need to negotiate the best possible deal for the United Kingdom and the closest possible relationship. That will also be the best possible deal for

Scotland. That is what we need to focus on. That is what needs to be done.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 294–295)

In the above example Cameron reformulates Robertson’s question, as if it would have concerned the United Kingdom’s future, when in reality Robertson was specifically discussing Scotland alone in his question. Cameron talks about negotiating “the best possible deal” for the UK, including Scotland, when Robertson had in fact hinted at the wish for Scotland to remain as a member of the EU, despite the referendum results. The standing ovation he refers to was given to SNP Member of European Parliament Alyn Smith’s speech where he asked members of the European Parliament to back Scotland’s position in the European Union and to “not let Scotland down” (Dearden, 2016). Cameron chose not to discuss Scotland separately from the rest of the United Kingdom in his response, promoting the unity of the different countries of United Kingdom.

#### 4.3.3 *Evaded questions*

In the following section I will investigate deeper the questions that received an evasive response from Cameron. Did the attitude of the questions affect Cameron’s response? An interesting aspect to analyse would be the face-threats in the questions, but this kind of analysis would require intensive close-reading that would extend beyond the scope of this study. Hence, to understand the questions slightly better, I investigated the questions’ attitude towards the European Union. A simple hypothesis here would be that Cameron evaded EU-negative questions more than EU-positive, as Cameron was himself EU-positive in his views. However, the situation in the House of Commons was not quite as simple as that at the time. Table 5 below shows the attitude of the evaded questions.

*Table 5: Evasion and attitude*

Attitude	Evaded questions	Total questions	%
EU-positive	21	59	35.6
EU-negative	14	21	66.7
Neutral	15	32	46.9
<b>Total</b>	50	112	44.6

The majority of evaded questions were in fact positive in their attitude towards the European Union. For this reason, the correlation between the question's attitude towards the EU and directness of Cameron's response is not quite as straightforward as one could easily think. Yet, one aspect that affects the great number of evaded EU-positive questions is the fact that nearly 53% of all questions in the entire data set were EU-positive. Thus, more interesting than the raw numbers of evaded questions of different attitudes are the percentages in Table 5 above. The percentages show that two thirds (14) of the EU-negative responses received an evasive response, while just under 36% of the EU-positive questions were evaded by Cameron. The number of evaded neutral questions sits between these two, at 15 questions, or 47%.

When investigating attitude towards the European Union in the House of Commons during the chosen time frame, it is important to remember the political situation of the time. The division between the different campaigns was not clearly cut between different parties, or Government and Opposition. There were supporters of both campaigns in most parties. The EU-positive members of opposition would blame Cameron for giving the promise of the referendum, and would challenge him about this matter, even though Cameron was EU-positive himself, too. Example (13) below shows how an EU-positive question received a subtly evasive response from Cameron:

(13) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

Notwithstanding our differences, I genuinely extend my best personal wishes to the Prime Minister and his family; I wish them all the best. However, the Prime Minister's legacy will undoubtedly be that he has brought us to the brink of being taken out of the European Union, so we on these Benches

will not be applauding his premiership. What advice has he given his successor on taking Scotland out of the EU against the wishes of Scottish voters?

Cameron: In terms of what the right hon. Gentleman says about Scotland, the United Kingdom and Europe, my advice to my successor, who is a brilliant negotiator, is that we should try to be as close to the European Union as we can be for the benefits of trade, co-operation and security. The channel will not get any wider once we leave the European Union, and that is the relationship we should seek. That would be good for the United Kingdom and good for Scotland.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, cols 289–290)

Here Robertson's question first threatens Cameron's own face by suggesting that despite Cameron's long career in politics and the Government, his legacy will be the EU-negative result of the referendum. Robertson suggests that the Scottish National Party is against this result and blames Cameron for it. In addition to that, Robertson asks Cameron a question regarding his successor, Prime Minister Theresa May, and suggests that May will be "taking Scotland out of the EU against the wishes of Scottish voters." This threatens not only May's own face and Cameron's face in relation to supporting May, but also the face of the Government and the Conservative party who have chosen May as the next leader of the party and Prime Minister. Cameron responds defensively, highlighting May's negotiating skills. He attempts to diminish the effects of leaving the Union by stating that "the channel will not get any wider" and discusses the UK as a whole, instead of Scotland individually. This example demonstrates why it would have been rather naïve to hypothesise that Cameron would only evade EU-negative questions, and that EU-positive questions would have been less challenging to him. The situation in the House was indeed much more complex than that.

#### 4.4 Analysis of development over time

In the beginning of this study I hypothesised that as the referendum drew closer, Cameron would face more uncomfortable questions, attacks, and confrontation from the opposition. This would then lead to evasive responses to more of the questions

presented to him. In this section I will investigate whether there were notable trends or developments in the responses and asked questions over the chosen time period, first half of 2016.

#### 4.4.1 Evasive responses

Figure 3 below gives an overall glance on the results on a timeline. I was interested in investigating whether Cameron used evasive responses more frequently towards the referendum than in the beginning of the chosen time period. This hypothesis turned out to be incorrect. As can be seen from Figure 3, there was not a notable increase in the frequency of evasive responses throughout the spring.

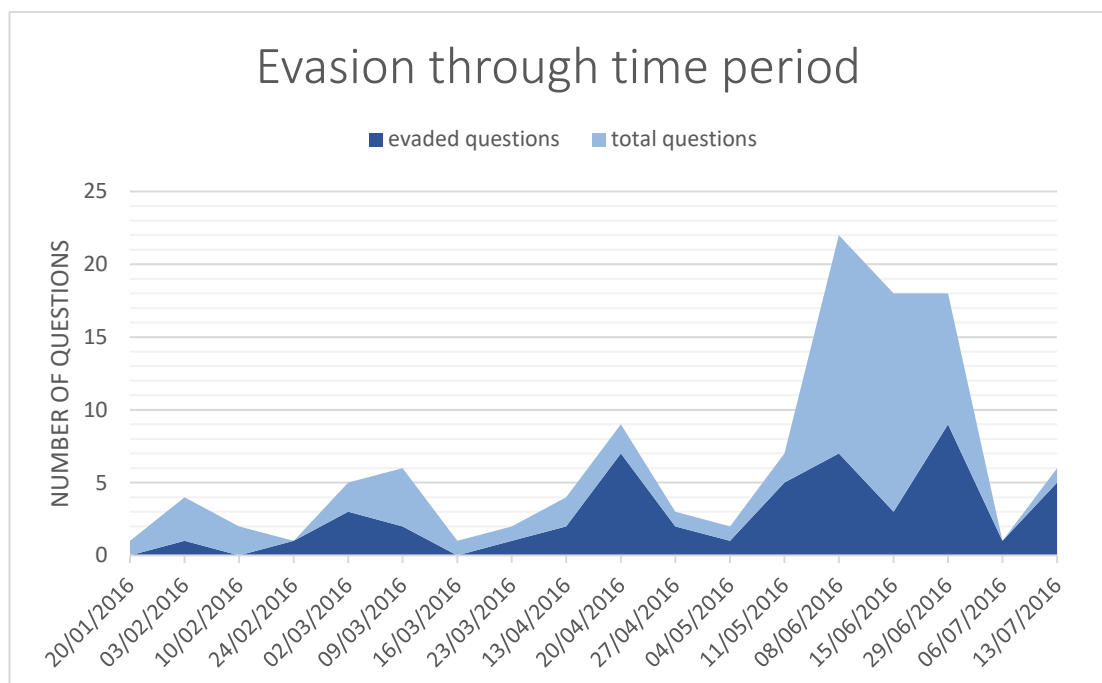


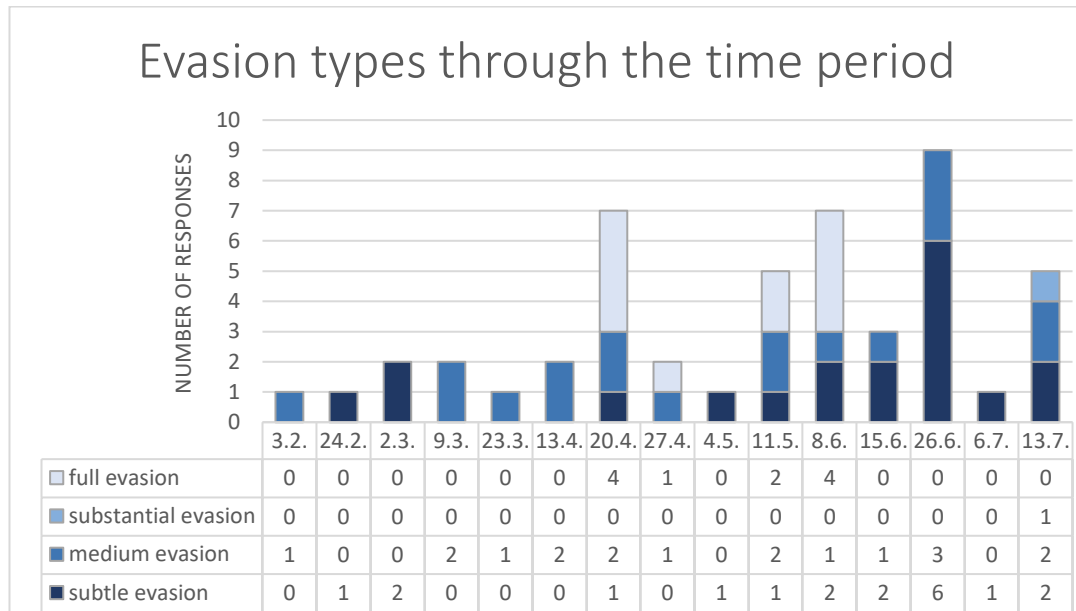
Figure 3: Development of questions and evasions

The figure shows the total number of relevant questions per PMQ session in lighter colour, and total number of evaded questions in darker colour. The number of questions regarding the referendum and EU membership did peak over a period of two months; mid-May to right after the referendum, end of June. The evasive responses, however, did not. There was a slight increase in the number of evasive responses, but as the overall number of questions increased as well, this cannot be seen as a remarkable trend. The number of evasions correlated to some extent with the number of relevant questions, but there was in fact a surprisingly minor increase in evasive responses, when the number of relevant questions increased so



dramatically. An interesting feature to notice is the number of evasions in the PMQ session of June 15<sup>th</sup>, which was the last session before the referendum, and that of the session right after the referendum, on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Both sessions had 18 questions altogether, but on the 15<sup>th</sup> Cameron evaded only three questions, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> he evaded nine questions. This is quite a large proportional difference, from 16.7% to 50% evasion rate.

Figure 4 shows how the different levels of evasion were distributed through the timeline. I have left out the sessions that did not have any relevant evasive responses, which were on January 20<sup>th</sup>, February 10<sup>th</sup>, and March 16<sup>th</sup>. As can be gathered from Figure 4, the distribution of the different evasion types was relatively even.



*Figure 4: Distribution of evasion types through the time period*

10 sessions out of 15 had subtly evasive responses, and 11 out of 15 had responses that were evasive on medium level. All sessions that had more than two evasive responses contained both of these evasion types. Thus, it can be stated that the distribution of these types was quite even and there were no notable patterns in their use. Substantial evasion occurred only once in the entire data set, on July 13<sup>th</sup>. As there was only one occurrence of this type, one cannot draw greater conclusions from its use through the timeline. Full evasion occurred 11 times in the entire data set, and these occurrences were distributed between PMQ sessions from April 20<sup>th</sup> to June 8<sup>th</sup>. This development is quite interesting to notice, but the reason for the great number of full evasion was partly the way the questions were asked. What needs to

be remembered is that many of the questions that Cameron fully ignored were asked in a group of questions. The questioner would use their floor to ask several questions, and Cameron might not reply to all of them. Often Cameron ignored several of the asked questions, maybe concentrating on only one of them in his response. This behaviour affects the high number of full evasion in some of the sessions.

Analysing the numbers of agenda shifts on a timeline would not be useful as the numbers per one session were so small; most of the sessions only had one or two occurrences of subtle, medium, or substantial evasion, which then either performed an agenda shift or not. Agenda shifts in general were also evenly performed throughout the timeline. What is interesting to notice, however, is how the agenda was shifted. Most of the time Cameron would shift the agenda either in favour of the European Union and the “remain” campaign, or to promote Government’s actions. All occasions when Cameron shifted the agenda to EU-positive direction occurred before the referendum. After the referendum the agenda shifts were performed in favour of the Government, the unity of the United Kingdom, or to attack. This makes sense, as before the referendum Cameron would use his floor to campaign for remaining in the European Union, but after the referendum the campaigning naturally ended. Agenda shifts promoting the actions of the Government were performed occasionally before the referendum too, but after the referendum the great majority of agenda shifts were performed in favour of the Government or to discuss Government actions in positive light.

Similarly, there were no apparent patterns in the use of overt or covert evasion techniques. Both techniques were used quite evenly throughout the timeline, and neither showed increasing or decreasing patterns. Again, as with the quantitative developmental analysis of agenda shifts, the numbers of evasive responses to analyse per session were very small. Hence, it is challenging, or even impossible to draw clear conclusions from the point of view of developmental analysis or timeline inspection. As was stated in Section 4.3, Cameron preferred covert methods over overt evasion. Most of the time the division between overt and covert methods per session was quite even. There was one session, Cameron’s last PMQ as a Prime Minister on July 13<sup>th</sup>, when all 5 cases of subtle, medium or substantial evasion were performed covertly. Out of all sessions in the data, this session had the greatest difference between the two types of evasion. Nevertheless, this cannot be seen as a remarkable feature.

#### 4.4.2 Questions

To get a better understanding of the development shown in Figures 3 and 4 above, I decided to investigate whether there were changes through the timeline in the types of questions that were presented to Cameron. The first step towards getting a better grasp of a potential development in the questions on a timeline was to see how the three different question types were divided between the different PMQ sessions. As was discussed before, the different question types can represent different levels of politeness. I was interested in investigating whether there were any notable changes in their distribution throughout the timeline. Figure 5 below gives an overview of the different question types, set on a timeline.

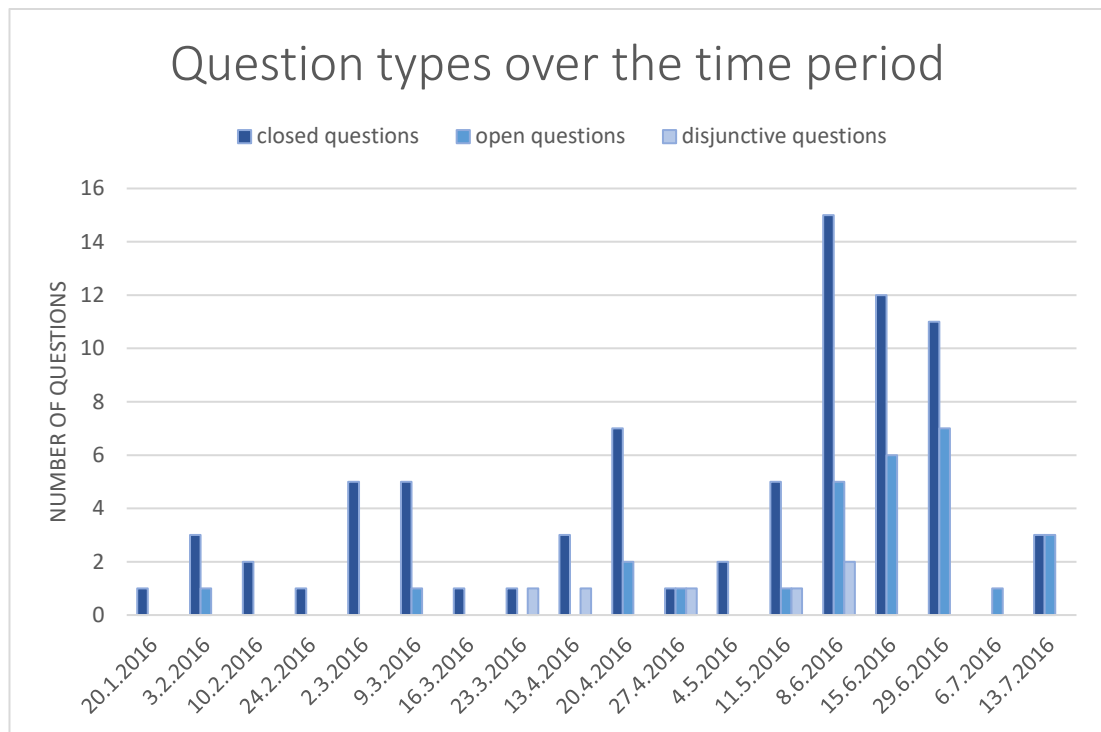


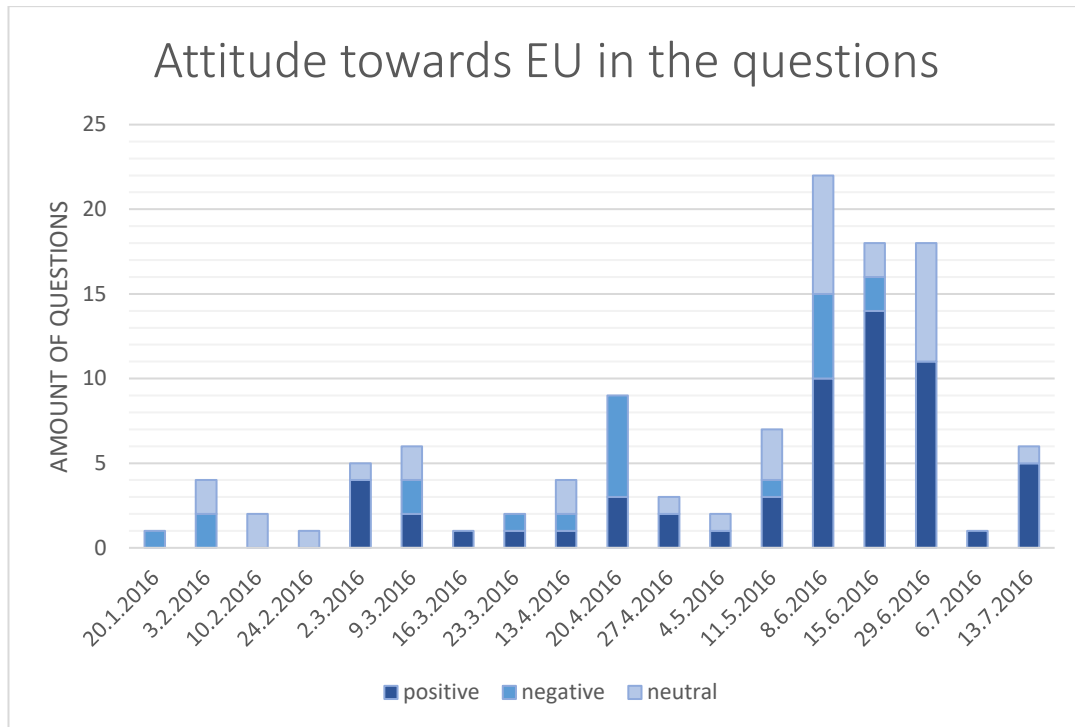
Figure 5: Development of question types

As was discussed in Section 4.1 above, closed questions were the most common question type. Open questions were the second-most common, and disjunctive questions were asked only a handful of times. For closed questions there is a good deal of variation throughout the time period. There is a sudden increase in closed questions around the referendum which peaks on June 8<sup>th</sup>, right under the referendum date of June 23<sup>rd</sup>, but outside the few weeks around the referendum there is not a notable increase or decrease. After the peak there is however an interesting decreasing pattern in the number of closed questions. Closed questions

are usually the most common question type in every session. There was only one session without a single closed question, and that was on 6<sup>th</sup> July, right after the peak in number of relevant questions, where in fact only one question relevant to this study was asked.

Open questions form an interesting pattern in Figure 5. There is a clear increase in the number of open questions which peaks on June 29<sup>th</sup>, right after the referendum. Even after that there are more or an equal number of open questions compared to closed questions per session. The increase is quite notable, as earlier in the spring there were several sessions where no open questions were asked at all. Like mentioned before, open questions give the respondent most freedom in their response. The questioner does not have much control over the direction of the response, and it is the most polite type of the three towards the respondent. It is interesting to notice that there would be an increase in this question type during the most turbulent time of the chosen period. Disjunctive questions are more difficult to draw conclusions from as there is such a small number of instances. There is only a very slight increase from one disjunctive question per session to two questions on 8<sup>th</sup> June, and after that, none. It is, however, interesting to note that there were no disjunctive questions at all in the data after June 8<sup>th</sup>.

To get a better grasp of the questions Cameron faced and to see whether there were any changes throughout the timeline I compared the attitude of the questions on a timeline. It could be hypothesised that EU-negative and EU-positive questions would increase before the referendum, as MPs could use the floor to promote their campaign. Figure 6 below shows the distribution between EU positive, EU negative, and neutral questions in each PMQ session.



*Figure 6: Development of the attitude of the questions*

In the sessions before May 11<sup>th</sup> there seems to be a good deal of variation in the proportions, and there are no clear patterns to be seen in the first two thirds of the time period. As the numbers of relevant questions per session are quite small, it is again quite challenging to find any clear patterns from this period. The last third of the time period, May 11<sup>th</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>, shows not only the peak in relevant questions, but interesting patterns in the attitudes of the questions. As is presented in Figure 6, there was a clear peak in EU positive questions right under the referendum and after it. The greatest mix of attitudes among the questions was on June 8<sup>th</sup> and it seems this was when the two campaigns both got floor and used it to promote their views. After this date the amount of negative questions quickly decreases and after the referendum there are none. As was seen in Figure 5 I discussed above, this was also the session where the question types were most mixed of all sessions, with two disjunctive questions, five open questions, and 15 closed questions. On June 15<sup>th</sup> the vast majority of questions showed a positive attitude towards the European Union. There was also a slight dip in the number of relevant questions and only three evasive responses by Cameron, as Figure 3 above shows.

Another interesting development that happened over the course of the chosen time period concerned the question regarding Cameron's position after the referendum. In the whole data set there were only two questions that Cameron

answered directly without any extra remarks. Usually Cameron would always lengthen his responses with additional opinions and points regarding the issue at hand, even when the actual response to the question would have been a direct answer. When Cameron would get the floor, generally he would make the most of it. This is why the two instances mentioned initially stood out of the data. These two cases were both closed questions that got a one-worded direct answer of “yes” or “no”. Interestingly the questions were almost identical:

(14) Richard Burgon (Leeds East) (Lab):

If the British people vote to leave the European Union, will the Prime Minister resign - yes or no?

Cameron: No.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, col 271)

(15) Mr Douglas Carswell (Clacton) (UKIP):

If the British people vote to leave the European Union, will the Prime Minister remain in office to implement their decision?

Cameron: Yes.

(HC Eng 13 April 2016, vol 608, col 348)

What is interesting about these two questions is not only their similarity and the one-worded responses which are not typical for David Cameron based on this data set. Another interesting similarity between the two cases is the fact that both of Cameron’s responses here ended up being untrue in a few months’ time. Without commenting on whether Cameron was being intentionally untrue in his responses at the time or not, it is noteworthy that the only completely unambiguous, one-worded responses in the data set were not true in the end.

There was a third question of the similar kind, asking whether Cameron would remain in his current position as the Prime Minister if the result of the referendum is “leave.” This third question was asked by Mr. Peter Bone in a set of several questions, and it was asked right under the referendum, two months later than Carswell’s question that received a direct answer. This time Cameron reacts quite differently:

(16) Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con):

What the Prime Minister said today on Europe is right: we have to go and campaign. I remember, Mr Speaker, what you said yesterday about notifying Members if one is going to visit their constituency, so may I say to the Prime Minister that a group of global-looking leave campaigners will be descending on Witney at lunch time this Sunday? I will be there. Will the Prime Minister be able to join us? **Given what he has just said, will he confirm that if the country votes to leave, he will be able to stay on as Prime Minister and negotiate the exit?**

Cameron: First, I am very sorry that I will not be able to meet my hon. Friend—I am making an appearance on the “Andrew Marr” programme on Sunday—but I would recommend that he goes to The Fleece pub in Witney and spends as much time and as much money as he can there, rather than on anything else.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1189)

Cameron chooses to ignore the question completely. Cameron also begins his response with “first” which is usually followed by another point with a marker such as “second”. Here he never reveals the second point, but only ends the response with a humoristic remark. What makes this case of evasion stand out is the fact that two months earlier Cameron had given such a straightforward answer to a similar question to the one he now chose to fully evade. The question certainly was an uncomfortable one for him to answer; Mr. Bone openly supports the “leave” campaign and he asks if Cameron would be joining the campaigners for lunch as they are campaigning against the EU-membership in Cameron’s own constituency. This is a confrontational setting to begin with, but in addition to that by the time, June 8<sup>th</sup>, it must have already been clear to Cameron what would happen if the people did vote “leave.” Indeed, only three weeks later he had resigned.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Findings

The findings presented in Section 4 revealed interesting patterns in Cameron's use of evasive techniques over the chosen time period. One of the main hypotheses of this study was that the amount of challenging questions would increase towards the referendum date, which would result in an increasing number of evasive responses. As it turned out, this was not the case. Cameron did not evade more questions as the referendum drew closer than he had previously done. In fact, the last session before the referendum had a surprisingly low number of evasive responses; only three evasions to 18 questions. This gives the evasion rate of only 16.7%, while the average for the whole data set was 42.9%. As was shown by the attitude analysis on the questions, instead of evasive responses it was the amount of EU-positive questions that increased notably. I then investigated whether the reason behind the low numbers of evasive responses could lie in increasing numbers of EU-positive questions. This turned out to be a challenging comparison to perform, as questions with EU-positive attitude could also be face-threatening to Cameron at the same time. However, it was discovered that the majority (over 57%) of EU-negative questions did receive an evasive response, while less than 36% of EU-positive questions were evaded. This could hint that the EU-positive attitude of the questions affected the decreasing need for Cameron to protect his faces with evasion.

The high number of EU-positive questions is interesting in the light of the referendum results. 51.9% of the voters were in favour of leaving the EU, while 48.1% voted to remain. The voting turnout was 72.2% ("EU referendum results", n.d.). Contrastingly, the pre-election polls suggested a different kind of result. Financial Times calculated an average result of opinion polling based on 272 different polls from 2010 to June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. The average result was 46% leave, 48% remain, and 6% undecided ("Brexit poll tracker", 2016). The vote was extremely tight, as were most of the opinion surveys as well. Nonetheless, it is clear that the attitudes of pre-election surveys as well as the referendum-related PMQ questions were both in favour of remaining in the European Union. What is important to note, however, is that the attitude of the questions does not directly represent the general attitude within Parliament. For instance, openly EU-positive MPs Jeremy Corbyn



and Angus Robertson got more floor in the sessions than other MPs, which might have increased the number of EU-positive questions. As the Speaker's ballot is random, some MPs might also get more floor than others by chance, and their attitude towards EU might affect the results as well. Nevertheless, the division between EU-negative and EU-positive questions is quite remarkable in this data set and clearly conflicts with the referendum results.

As discussed in section 2.2.2, Bavelas et al. (1990) suggested that the reason behind an evasive response often lies in a face-threatening question. Previous research suggested that in PMQs the rules of politeness are quite different from other sociolinguistic settings, as the questioners can be openly impartial and aim to challenge the respondent. The number of evasive responses was quite low during the time where most of the relevant questions were asked. It could then be gathered that most of the question asked during the few weeks around the referendum were not face-threatening to Cameron. It did become clear through the data analysis that many MPs used the floor to promote the "remain" campaign, which was in Cameron's interest as well. Therefore face-protective moves were not necessary with these questions, and Cameron could answer the questions presented to him more easily. Another feature that could suggest the exchange in the PMQs getting less pugnacious is the complete lack of disjunctive questions in the data after June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Admittedly, the number of disjunctive questions in the entire data set was quite low. Nevertheless, as this question type is generally the most uncomfortable for the respondent to answer, this could again imply that there were fewer face-threats directed at Cameron after this session. As a contrast, the more polite open questions increased notably at the same time.

The decrease in EU-negative questions right under the referendum was quite surprising. The referendum was drawing closer, and the two campaigns still had time to woo undecided voters. An event that did affect campaigning during the last weeks before the referendum was MP Jo Cox's death on June 16<sup>th</sup>, due to which the referendum campaigning was suspended until June 18<sup>th</sup> (Cooper, 2016). However, none of the PMQ sessions occurred during the suspension period, and as the suspension affected both campaigns, it would not explain why the "leave" campaign became less active during the sessions. One explanation to the high number of EU positive questions would be that the "remain" campaign simply got more floor in the sessions. This could have happened by chance, if the Speaker's ballot simply resulted

in mostly speakers with an EU positive attitude, or it could have been intentional. As the amount of neutral questions was also very low in the sessions right before the referendum, it is likely that the MPs supporting the “remain” campaign decided to take their chance and promote their views on the matter much more than before. This development is also surprising when considering these results in the light of previous studies. As stated in Section 2, Harris as well as Bull & Wells concluded that face-threats are a prominent feature of PMQs, and that politeness shown in the exchange is generally only negative. It is thus quite interesting that the session known for its adversarial nature would be used for campaigning, and not only that but almost only promoting the “remain” campaign, instead of the “leave” campaign using the floor for the same purpose. It is impossible to know what the reason behind this phenomenon truly was, and such conclusions cannot be drawn from these findings. It is however a fascinating finding of this study that the general atmosphere in the PMQs did not get more conflictual even under such an important political event.

One interesting pattern of Cameron’s evasive responses had to do with the topic of Scotland. This does not directly relate to the topic of EU or the referendum which are the main focuses of this study but was notable throughout the data set and affected Cameron’s responses. Questions that discussed Scotland as an individual country with opinions that do not agree with the Government or the referendum results were often evaded by Cameron. The Prime Minister systematically evaded the point of view by turning the discussion into the United Kingdom as a whole. Many of these questions were asked by the leader of the Scottish National Party, Angus Robertson. In many of Robertson’s questions throughout the data set he discussed Scotland’s opinions and position as an individual country within the United Kingdom, instead of presenting the matters from the point of view of the UK as a whole. Cameron tended to evade these kinds of questions; he seemed to avoid discussing Scotland separately from the rest of the United Kingdom, aiming to highlight the unity of the UK. Where he did discuss Scotland as a separate area of the UK, he brought out the benefits of Scotland being a part of the UK, like was shown in Example (6). Other cases of this discussion pattern and differences in point of view can be seen in Examples (12) and (13).

The average evasion rate for Cameron across the entire data set was 44.6%. To set this in a larger context and proportion, the quantities can be compared to those presented in Sandra Harris’s study, which was discussed in Section 2.2.2. Harris

found that 39% of the responses in her data set were direct, and the rest were either indirect or evasive. David Cameron answered directly 28 questions out of 112, or 25% of the questions. This is an interesting comparison to make; based on this it could be said that Cameron's rate of direct answers in this data set is lower than the average in Harris's study. However, one needs to be cautious with such conclusions, as the two data sets are quite different. In this study the chosen topic was inherently challenging to Cameron's faces, personal as well as political. In addition to that the higher number of evasive responses inevitably results from the specific sociolinguistic context of PMQs. Harris studied evasion in political interviews, where the interviewer is a journalist who is expected to show politeness and impartiality. In PMQs face-threatening acts are intensified instead of avoided, as previous studies have shown (Harris, 2001; Bull & Wells, 2012).

## 5.2 Rasiah's framework

One of the aims of this study was to test Rasiah's framework in the context of a different country, with a different respondent and a different topic. Generally speaking, the framework suited the purposes of this study rather well. Rasiah's way of categorising the questions and answers gave interesting insights into the data and was useful for getting a good overview of Cameron's use of evasion. Since the political settings and parliamentary conventions of Australia and Britain are relatively close to each other (Rhodes, 2016), it was very easy to adapt the framework to the context of British politics. Some of the cases were challenging to categorise and analyse as the borders between different categories were rather hazy. For instance, the line between subtle and medium level evasion was challenging to draw. Intermediate responses often had similar characteristics to evasive responses, and vice versa. Fully evasive responses could be difficult to categorise if the evaded question was asked in a group of similar questions, and the respondent answered some of the questions but not all. These are all examples of situations where the qualitative analysis required very detailed close reading, and in the end, there might not even be one right category to choose.

Analysing data into several different categories with very slight differences can give fascinating results and result in a deep understanding of the data. The downside of detailed categorisation of complicated data such as human language is the inevitable challenges with cases that do not fit the categories as easily as one

might hope. An ideal situation with analysis such as this would be to have several opinions on the categorisation of each question–answer pair. One problematic feature of the method which Rasiah does not mention in the 2009 paper or in her dissertation from 2007 is that the method relies so heavily on the opinion of the researcher. There were several cases in the data set that were challenging to analyse, and with these instances it would have been helpful to have a second opinion. Some of the instances required such close analysis that it would have been beneficial to discuss the instances with another researcher acquainted with the topic. This kind of analysis or consultation would of course not have been possible with this thesis but might be a suggestion for other studies that apply this method.

I chose to expand Rasiah’s framework in regard to the questions. The results of this study support the claim that a close analysis on the questions is nearly as crucial to the study of evasion as is a close analysis of the responses. The previous studies of this particular field support this claim as well, which was initially the reason why I decided that Rasiah’s framework as presented in the 2009 paper was not quite adequate. Restricting the analysis to the questions only does answer the question of what kind of evasion techniques can be found from the data and can be useful for quantitative purposes. However, it does not explain why these techniques were used to the extent that they were. The different question types differ in level of politeness, and therefore inevitably affect the quality of the response. Analysis of the attitude conveyed by the questions might not be as unambiguous with other topics as it was in the context of this study. For this study it gave valuable insight into the reasons behind the low numbers of evasive responses in the sessions right before the referendum. The correlation between EU-positive questions and low number of evasive responses was not quite as straightforward as one might have hypothesised. Nonetheless, it is clear that EU-negative questions were more likely to be face-threatening than EU-neutral or EU-positive questions, and thus were more likely to be evaded.

### 5.3 Limitations of the study

This study covers only a rather short period of time with a very limited topic. For this reason, these results are not adequate for drawing greater conclusions about Cameron’s use of evasive techniques, or the discourse of Prime Minister’s

Questions. This study could be extended in further studies, by covering a different topic from the same timeline, broadening the timeline, or investigating the topic in a different setting. The topic of the referendum sets some limitations to the timeline of the data set, but Cameron's evasion could be studied with another topic that repeats throughout different points of his political career. A comparative study could be performed with data from the press, such as political interviews.

An aspect which this study did not investigate was the potentially face-threatening nature of the questions. This kind of analysis was not part of Rasiah's framework, and I did not include this kind of analysis in this study. As has been stated previously in this paper (page 9), the reason for an evasive response often lies in a face-threat posed by the question. Thus, it would be interesting and even necessary to analyse this aspect to get a better grasp of the reasons behind the evasions performed by the respondent. I chose to include this kind of analysis through the attitude of the questions, but this approach was not completely unproblematic either. Even though EU-negative questions were mostly evaded by Cameron and therefore most likely face-threatening, EU-positive questions could be face-threatening as well.

Analysis of face-threats was done with some individual examples, but not systematically to the entire data set. During the analysis I was aware of the three faces Cameron tried to maintain, and some of the face threats were straightforward to analyse. For instance, threats to Cameron's face in relation to supporting Prime Minister Theresa May received an evasive response from Cameron every time. Yet, for the majority of the instances the analysis was much more challenging. Thus, the reason why I chose to not extend the framework to the detailed analysis of face-threats is because this kind of analysis can be a very complex process. It can be nearly impossible to decipher whether a respondent interprets a question as face-threatening, as the face-threat could be underlying, implied, and not necessarily apparent to anyone else but the questioner and respondent alone. To fully understand the dynamic between a questioner and respondent in the context of this study, one would have to know the mutual history between the two, as well as the political background and opinions of both. Similarly, one must be very familiar with the political issue discussed and its implications to both parties and the public. Close reading to this extent stretched beyond the scope of this particular study and would be quite challenging with a data set of this size with such a complex context. Hence,

I chose to leave this kind of analysis out. It would, however, be an interesting addition to future studies of this topic.

## 6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to perform a comprehensive analysis on the evasive techniques used by David Cameron during the Spring of 2016, on the topic of the EU membership referendum. The framework was defined by Parameswary Rasiah in her 2009 paper, and it was adapted and extended slightly to fit the purposes of this study. The data consisted of question–answer pairs from PMQ sessions that discussed the chosen topic. The pairs were closely read and analysed so that they could be categorised according to the framework. The results combined quantitative and qualitative methods, and they were discussed from developmental point of view as well.

The findings showed interesting patterns in Cameron’s use of evasive techniques over the chosen time period. One of the main hypotheses of this study was that the amount of challenging questions would increase towards the referendum date, which would result in an increasing number of evasive responses. The results of the study did not support this hypothesis. Cameron did not evade more questions as the referendum drew closer than he had previously done. Even though the number of relevant questions rose towards the referendum, the number of challenging questions did not. Instead of using their floor in the PMQs to challenge Cameron, many MPs chose to present their EU-positive agenda in a way that was easy for Cameron to agree with. As was shown by the attitude analysis, Cameron was more likely to evade EU-negative questions than EU-positive questions. This suggests that the rise in the number of EU-positive questions towards the referendum might then have affected the low numbers of evasive responses.

This study has shown that David Cameron evaded nearly half (44.6%) of the Brexit-related questions asked during PMQs in the spring and summer of 2017. Even though the number of evasive responses did not increase remarkably during the time span, the evasion rate is still relatively high in this context. Since one of the core purposes of Questions to the Prime Minister is to hold the Government accountable to the Parliament and the public, the high evasion rate in this particular context is

slightly problematic. The adversarial nature of the session makes it difficult for the Prime Minister to answer all of the questions without exposing themselves or the Government to face damage. However, if the head of Government does not answer the questions presented to them during a session which is held in pursuit of ensuring the accountability of the Government, it undermines the purpose of the session. This supports the importance of studying evasion not only in the context of political interviews, but in parliamentary setting as well.

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## Appendix

This Appendix contains the entire data set used in this study in chronological order. In pursuit of transparency, below each question–answer pair I have included information on how the pair was categorised.

(i) Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con):

The Prime Minister is aware that a number of colleagues and I await his response to our request, made in November, for a meeting regarding his EU renegotiations to discuss the importance of this Parliament—by itself, if necessary—being able to stop any unwanted taxes, regulations or directives, which goes to the core of issues such as control of our borders, business regulation and so on. Will he now meet us prior to the next EU meeting?

Cameron: As my hon. Friend can imagine, I am having a range of meetings with colleagues about the European issue. I am sure that I will be covering as many in our parliamentary party as possible. I have always felt, with my hon. Friend, that he has slightly made up his mind already and wants to leave the EU whatever the results, and I do not want to take up any more of his time than is necessary.

(HC Eng 20 January 2016, vol 604, col 1414)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: indirect answer

(ii) John Mann (Bassetlaw) (Lab):

Is that it? Is that the best that the Prime Minister can do?<sup>1</sup> There is nothing for British pensioners and nothing for British workers, and, as both the Office for Budget Responsibility and the Treasury have confirmed, the Prime Minister's long-term economic plan relies on more than a million new migrants entering this country before 2020. Has he got the bottle to confirm that inconvenient truth?

Cameron: I will tell the hon. Gentleman what we are doing for pensioners, and that is putting a triple lock on pensions. Never again will they get the 75p rise that they got from Labour; their pensions now rise either in relation to prices or wages, or by 2.5%. I will tell the hon. Gentleman what we are doing for people who want to work hard in Britain, and that is creating the 2.3 million more jobs that have been created since I became Prime Minister. But yes, of course I believe that we will succeed more as a country if we get a good deal in Europe and stay in a reformed Europe. That will be good for jobs, good for investment, and good for growth, and that is what I am fighting for.

(HC Eng 3 February 2016, vol 605, col 912)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: medium evasion

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<sup>1</sup> This reaction from Mann was to Cameron responding to the very first question of the session and listing his engagements for the day.

Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(iii) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

The timing of the forthcoming European Union referendum is extremely important. Today, the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have jointly called for a commitment by the UK Government not to hold the EU referendum in June as it would clash with elections to the devolved legislatures. Will the Prime Minister give that commitment today?

Cameron: First, there is no agreement and so no date has yet been fixed for the referendum. We have discussed this a lot in this House of Commons and we legislated to ensure that we would not hold the referendum at the same time as the Scottish or Welsh elections. The former First Minister of Scotland—the right hon. Member for Gordon (Alex Salmond), who is not in his place today—has said that it would be wrong to hold the referendum within six weeks of those elections, and I can guarantee that that will not happen.

(HC Eng 3 February 2016, vol 605, col 916)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: indirect answer

(iv) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

The First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have written today saying that they believe that holding a referendum in June “risks confusing issues when clarity is required” and they call on the Prime Minister to “defer the EU referendum at least until later in the year”. Why will the Prime Minister not respect the electorates and the Governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and give that commitment today?

Cameron: First, I do respect the former First Minister of Scotland, who said that six weeks was what was necessary. I also respect the electorates of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the basis that I think people are perfectly capable of making up their minds in a local election, a Scottish parliamentary election or a Welsh Assembly election and then, a period of some weeks afterwards, making up their minds all over again on the vital question of the European Union. So, no date has been fixed, and there must be a six-week gap. Frankly, I think that the right hon. Gentleman is looking for something to complain about. This House has voted for a referendum, and it would be pretty odd if, having voted for a referendum, we then spent ages debating about not having one.

(HC Eng 3 February 2016, vol 605, col 917)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: intermediate response

(v) Mr Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con):

May I share my right hon. Friend’s disappointment that despite all his hard work, the European Union is forcing him to abandon our manifesto pledge to change the benefits system for migrants?

Will he confirm that, sadly, the only way in which we are going to be able to regain control over our own borders is by leaving the European Union?

Cameron: I have great respect for my hon. Friend, but we do not agree on this one. We said in our manifesto that anyone coming to Britain from the EU searching for work should not get unemployment benefit, and we have fulfilled that promise. We said that if within six months they do not have a job, they should go home—we have fulfilled that promise. We said that people should not be able to come here and send British child benefit back to their families, and we have secured that they will only get child benefit at a local rate. And we said no more “something for nothing”; the idea that someone could come here and claim immediately from our in-work benefits system without paying in was not right. I said we would secure a four-year gap and we have. People said that would be impossible, but that is what we have put in place. It is a negotiation, but these are good proposals that I think will have the backing of the British people, because they mean no more something for nothing, and that is a vital value for Britain.

(HC Eng 3 February 2016, vol 605, col 918)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: direct answer

(vi) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

In the context of the referendums, whether in Scotland or across the UK on EU membership, do not voters have a right to know that what is promised by the UK Government can be trusted and will be delivered in full?

Cameron: I can tell the right hon. Gentleman everything that has been committed to by this Government will be delivered. We committed to this huge act of devolution to Scotland, and we have delivered it, we committed to the Scotland Bill, and we are well on the way to delivering it—with all the things we said we would, including those vital Smith principles.

(HC Eng 10 February 2016, vol 605, col 1571)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: intermediate response

(vii) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

Will the Prime Minister tell the Treasury that time is running out on delivering a fair fiscal framework, and that it must agree a deal that is both fair to the people of Scotland and fair to the rest of the United Kingdom?

Cameron: There is an ongoing negotiation to reach a fair settlement, and I would say to the Scottish First Minister and the Scottish Finance Minister that they have to recognise there must be fairness across the rest of the United Kingdom too. But with good will, I can tell you that no one is keener on agreement than me. I want the Scottish National party, here and in Holyrood, to have to start making decisions—which taxes are you going to raise, what are you going to do with benefits? I want to get rid of, frankly, this grievance agenda and let you get on with a governing agenda, and then we can see what you are made of.

(HC Eng 10 February 2016, vol 605, col 1571)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: indirect answer

(viii) Mr Owen Paterson (North Shropshire) (Con):

The United Kingdom endorses the Code of Good Practice on Referendums, published by the European Commission for Democracy through Law, which states: “Equality of opportunity must be guaranteed for the supporters and opponents of the proposal being voted on.” It also states: “Equality must be ensured in terms of public subsidies and other forms of backing.” Yesterday, Sir Jeremy Heywood sent a letter to Departments preventing Ministers from having access to civil service briefings. Has the Prime Minister checked whether that letter was compatible with the guidelines on neutrality?

Cameron: I am very happy with the letter that was sent out, for this reason. The Government have a position on this issue: the Government’s position is that we would be better off in a reformed European Union. Ministers are able to depart from that position, and campaign in a personal capacity. That is, I think, a very important statement. It is right in terms of how we go about it, but it does not mean that the Government are neutral. It does not mean that the civil service is neutral. The Government have a policy from which people can depart. As for the funding of the referendum campaign, we now have very clear laws and rules in place—and the Electoral Commission—to make sure that both campaigns are funded properly, and I think that that is good for our democracy. # won’t comment on whether the guidelines are violated or not.

(HC Eng 24 February 2016, vol 606, cols 299–300)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(ix) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

We all have a right not to be discriminated against on the basis of age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, disability or ethnicity. Parents have rights to maternity and paternity leave entitlement. Workers have the right to paid holidays and the right to work for no more than 48 hours each week. All those rights are guaranteed through the European Union. Does the Prime Minister agree that there are huge social benefits from being members of the European Union?

Cameron: The point I would make is that in recent years what we have done, including under this Government, is to add to the rights that people have, including maternity and paternity rights. The emphasis in Europe now needs to be on making sure that we expand our single market and make it more successful for our businesses, recognising that social benefits matter as well, but principally I believe that they are a matter for this House.

(HC Eng 2 March 2016, vol 606, col 944)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(x) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

Millions of UK citizens live elsewhere in the European Union. European decisions have helped the environment by reducing sulphur dioxide emissions by nine tenths. Relations between the 28 EU member states are often imperfect but they are maintained through dialogue and agreement, which surely is a huge improvement on the confrontations and wars of the past. Will the Prime Minister concentrate on the positive arguments for EU membership and reject the approach of “Project Fear”?

Cameron: My arguments about being stronger in the reformed European Union, safer in the reformed European Union and better off in the reformed European Union are all positive arguments. I would add to that the point that the right hon. Gentleman makes, which is that things such as pollution cross borders and so it makes sense to work together. The fundamental point he makes is one worth thinking about. He and I are both post-war children, but we should never forget, when we sit around that table, that just 70 years ago these countries were murdering each other on the continent of Europe. For all the frustrations of this institution, and, believe me, there are many, we should never forget that fact—the fact that we talk, the fact that we work together and the fact that we resolve our disputes around that table.

(HC Eng 2 March 2016, vol 606, cols 944–945)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: indirect answer

(xi) Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden) (Con):

Thank you, Mr Speaker. For five or six years, the number of national insurance numbers issued to EU migrants has been hundreds of thousands higher than the official immigration figures. That implies that the official immigration figures may be a dramatic underestimate. We can know the truth of the matter only if Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs releases its data on active EU national insurance numbers, but HMRC has refused to do so. Will the Prime Minister instruct HMRC to release those statistics immediately so that we can understand the truth about European Union immigration?

Cameron: I am glad that we have the single transferable question, if not the single transferable vote. It is very good to hear from my right hon. Friend. The reason why the numbers do not tally is that a person can get a national insurance number for a very short-term visit, and people who are already here but without a national insurance number can apply for one, so the numbers are quite complex. HMRC has given greater information, and I will ensure that that continues to be the case.

(HC Eng 2 March 2016, vol 606, col 946)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: no



(xii) Richard Benyon (Newbury) (Con):

A very large proportion of the fish caught by British vessels and landed in the UK are exported to Europe, mainly to EU countries, and, under reforms that were led by the British Government, a great many of our fishermen fish in the sovereign waters of other European Union countries. Does my right hon. Friend agree that our seas, those that exploit them, and the communities that they support are better off in a reformed European Union?

Cameron: I do agree with my hon. Friend and I pay tribute to him for the huge amount of work he did to reform the common fisheries policy from what was a very poor policy to one that is now working much better for our fishermen. When it comes to fishing and farming, the key issue will be ensuring that Europe's markets remain open to the produce that we land and grow. That will be vital to the debate that we have in the months ahead.

(HC Eng 2 March 2016, vol 606, cols 947–948)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(xiii) Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op):

As the Prime Minister struggles with certain elements in his party over Europe, does he ever think back to an inspirational and visionary Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, who faced similar difficulties but stood up to the rebels in his own party and secured a yes vote for staying in Europe? Will he join me in celebrating the centenary of Harold Wilson's birth next week? Across all parties we should celebrate that great, innovative Prime Minister.

Cameron: I do feel a natural sympathy for anyone who has had this job, irrespective of the side of the House they were on. I think that Harold Wilson did some very important things for our country. I know that the hon. Gentleman has a particular connection to him. I wish his family well on this important centenary. I am sure that we approach things in different ways, but one thing that we would have agreed on is that Britain's future is better off in a reformed European Union.

(HC Eng 2 March 2016, vol 606, cols 950–951)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: yes

(xiv) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

The refugee crisis is the biggest issue facing Governments across Europe. We now know that, under a UK Government programme, in Folkestone, trafficking victims were locked up without food, asylum-seeking children were forced to sleep on concrete floors, patients with diarrhoea were denied access to showers, and a naked woman was allegedly beaten at a detention centre. Is the Prime Minister ashamed of that?

Cameron: I will look carefully at the points the right hon. Gentleman makes. I would say that our asylum system is fair, and Britain down the ages has given asylum to people who are fleeing torture and

persecution. When it comes to resettling Syrian refugees, it was instructive at this week's European Council to see a chart that showed how many countries have actually resettled Syrian refugees. Britain has done far better than any other country, bar Germany.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, col 270)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xv) Richard Burgon (Leeds East) (Lab):

If the British people vote to leave the European Union, will the Prime Minister resign—yes or no?

Cameron: No.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, col 271)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: direct answer

(xvi) Anne Marie Morris (Newton Abbot) (Con):

It is much to the Government's credit that more than 2 million jobs have been created since 2010, but nearly 1 million of those have gone to non-UK EU nationals. Does the Prime Minister agree that the EU's free movement of people is damaging the employment prospects of UK nationals and has contributed to the 1.6 million British people who remain unemployed? That has not been compensated for by an equivalent level of jobs for UK nationals in other European countries.

Cameron: If my hon. Friend looks at the figures for the last five years, she will see that two thirds of the rise in employment has been from jobs going to British people. Where I agree with her is that, with the welfare reform that we have introduced for EU citizens and the tougher control of migration from outside the EU, we should see welfare reform in the UK as the flipside of migration control. We want to ensure that it always pays for British people to train up and do the jobs that are being made available, and we should see immigration control and welfare reform, together with a growing economy, as a way of getting more of our people into work.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, cols 271–272)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xvii) Julie Elliott (Sunderland Central) (Lab)

Does the Prime Minister agree with me that it is very important to make the positive case for Britain remaining in the EU: each of us get £1,200 back for every £120 we put in; we have lower prices; we have more choice in shops; and we have easier travel for holidays and businesses?

Cameron: The hon. Lady makes an important point, which is that, in all the arguments about single markets, sovereignty and all the rest of it, we can sometimes lose sight of some of the simple consumer benefits of being a member of the European Union. She mentions cheaper air travel, ease of travel and not having any tariffs. These are things we take for granted now, but they were simply not the case 40 years ago. I agree that that is a strong part of the very positive case we should make for remaining in the EU. With the hon. Lady's own constituency in mind, we should also point to the enormous success of the British car industry, which now employs and is responsible for more than 140,000 jobs. That is a great European success story. A lot of those cars go to the European market and we want to make sure that that continues tariff-free.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, cols 272)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(xviii) Julie Elliott (Sunderland Central) (Lab)

Will the Prime Minister explain how our membership of the EU benefits so many aspects of our lives?

Cameron: The hon. Lady makes an important point, which is that, in all the arguments about single markets, sovereignty and all the rest of it, we can sometimes lose sight of some of the simple consumer benefits of being a member of the European Union. She mentions cheaper air travel, ease of travel and not having any tariffs. These are things we take for granted now, but they were simply not the case 40 years ago. I agree that that is a strong part of the very positive case we should make for remaining in the EU. With the hon. Lady's own constituency in mind, we should also point to the enormous success of the British car industry, which now employs and is responsible for more than 140,000 jobs. That is a great European success story. A lot of those cars go to the European market and we want to make sure that that continues tariff-free.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, cols 272)

Question type: open

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(xix) Sir William Cash (Stone) (Con):

The Government have just presented three White Papers to Parliament under their self-imposed legal duty to provide information under the European Union Referendum Act 2015. The Minister for Europe, during proceedings between the two Houses, gave me an undertaking that the Government information under that Act would certainly, as he put it, be accurate and impartial. The three recent White Papers are not. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is the enforcer of the ministerial code, which demands that Ministers give accurate information to Parliament. Will he issue instructions to Foreign Office Ministers to review and correct those White Papers?

Cameron: First, let me say to my hon. Friend that we believe in the sovereignty of Parliament. Parliament dictated that those documents would be published, and that is why they are being published. On the question of their content, their content has been prepared by civil servants under all the appropriate codes. If he does not agree with some of the content, I would say to him and to other

colleagues: challenge the content. Have an argument about the content. Stop arguing about the process.

(HC Eng 9 March 2016, vol 607, cols 275)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: intermediate response

(xx) Angela Smith (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Lab):

In 2014, we exported £12.8 billion-worth of food products, with 73% of the total going to other European states. It is no wonder that 71% of Food and Drink Federation members want us to avoid Brexit. Does the Prime Minister think that our prospect of further improving the export profile of food manufacturing will be strengthened by staying in the European Union?

Cameron: The view from food manufacturers, farmers and indeed the wider business community, 81% of which said yesterday that they wanted to stay in a reformed Europe, is very clear. The arguments on food are particularly clear. Our farmers produce some of the cleanest and best food anywhere in the world, and they know that they have access to a market of 500 million consumers without tariffs, without quotas and without any problems. We should not put that at risk. When we look at some of the alternatives to being a part of the single market—a Canadian-style free trade deal, for example—we can see that there are restrictions. Quotas on beef are one example, and I do not want to see that applying to British farmers who have so much to be proud of.

(HC Eng 16 March 2016, vol 607, cols 948–949)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(xxi) Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con):

The House of Commons Library confirms that this year our net contribution to the EU will increase by more than £2.6 billion—I think it is actually £2,627 million. Should that money be spent on supporting people in Bulgaria and Romania, or should it be spent in this country, supporting our vulnerable and disabled people?

Cameron: I say to my hon. Friend that our net contribution accounts for just over one penny in every pound paid in taxes, so as we enter this vital debate we have to work out whether we believe that that sort of investment—one penny out of every pound—is worth the jobs and the investment, the growth and the security, and the safety and the solidarity that we get through working with our partners. I will be on the side that thinks it is, and clearly he will be on the side that thinks it is not, but we should have a polite and reasonable debate as we go through this. What I will say, which I am sure he will welcome, is that we have limited our contributions to the EU budget because we set an overall EU budget that is falling over the next six years. The reason our contribution varies is that part of it is determined by the success of a country's economy and—to return to the questions I have just been answering—because our economy has been growing faster than others in Europe, we will make a slightly larger contribution than we otherwise would.

(HC Eng 23 March 2016, vol 607, cols 1568–1569)

Question type: disjunctive

Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xxii) Mr Douglas Carswell (Clacton) (UKIP):

If the United Kingdom votes to leave the European Union in June, does the Prime Minister believe that the EU institutions will respond vindictively?

Cameron: It is a very difficult question to answer. We should not be naive, were we to vote to leave, in believing that other countries would automatically cut us some sort of sweetheart deal. Just take one industry as an example: farming. Our farmers know now that they have duty-free, quota-free and tax-free access to a market of 500 million people. Were we to leave, could we really guarantee that French, Italian or Spanish farmers would not put pressure on their Governments to give us a less good deal? I do not think that we could. That is one of the many reasons why I think we are safer, more secure and better off in a reformed European Union.

(HC Eng 23 March 2016, vol 606, col 1572)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: indirect answer

(xxiii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

Yesterday the European Commission announced new proposals on country-by-country tax reporting, so that companies must declare where they make their profits in the European Union and in blacklisted tax havens. Conservative MEPs voted against the proposal for country-by-country reporting and against the blacklisting. Can the Prime Minister now assure us that Conservative MEPs will support the new proposal?

Cameron: Let me welcome the country-by-country tax reporting proposal put forward by Commissioner Jonathan Hill, who was appointed by this Government as the United Kingdom Commissioner. That is very much based on the work that we have been doing, leading the collaboration between countries and making sure that we share tax information. As we discussed on Monday, this has gone far faster and far further under this Government than under any previous Government.

(HC Eng 13 April 2016, vol 608, cols 343–344)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xxiv) Mr Douglas Carswell (Clacton) (UKIP):

If the British people vote to leave the European Union, will the Prime Minister remain in office to implement their decision?

Cameron: Yes.

(HC Eng 13 April 2016, vol 608, col 348)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: direct answer

(xxv) Neil Carmichael (Stroud) (Con):

Again on Europe, does the Prime Minister agree that the European Union is not just the world's biggest single market but an ample source of foreign direct investment, providing 50% of the investment that we receive; and an excellent platform for supply chains to thrive and prosper, which gives them the ability to get the skills and the innovation that they need? That, for my constituency, means that Sartorius, Renishaw, Delphi and a whole load of other hi-tech companies thrive and prosper, as they do elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Cameron: I well remember my visit to Renishaw's with my hon. Friend, where I was shown what I think was a world first: a bicycle that was printed on a 3D printer. I did not get on and give it a try, but it looked as though it would carry even someone of my weight. He is right, because the single market is 500 million people, and it is a great market for our businesses and our services. Increasingly, the market and the supply chain are getting more and more integrated. That is why we should think very carefully before separating ourselves from it.

(HC Eng 13 April 2016, vol 608, col 348)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: indirect answer

(xxvi) Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg (North East Somerset) (Con):

Over 200,000 economic migrants came from the European Union in the period for which we have figures. Yet the propaganda sheet sent out to the British people claims that we maintain control of our borders. Have we withdrawn from the free movement of people, or is that sheet simply untrue?

Cameron: The truth is this: economic migrants who come to the European Union do not have the right to come to the UK. They are not European nationals. They are nationals of Pakistan, or Morocco, or Turkey. None of those people has that right. That is very important—and frankly that is why it is important that we send information to households: so that they can see the truth about what is proposed. What my hon. Friend has just put forward is a classic scare story. Britain has borders. Britain will keep its borders. We have got the best of both worlds.

(HC Eng 13 April 2016, vol 608, cols 352–353)

Question type: disjunctive  
 Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xxvii) Mr Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con):

May I ask my right hon. Friend whether he agrees with the Treasury forecast issued on Monday, which warns that if we stay in the European Union, there will be 3 million more migrants by 2030?

Cameron: The point about the Treasury forecast is that it takes the Office for National Statistics figures and the Office for Budget Responsibility figures and it does not alter them; it is trying to make a very clear and pure argument—backed by the Governor of the Bank of England yesterday—that shows what would happen if Britain left the EU. There is a demand out there for independent and clear statistics, and that is exactly what the Treasury has provided.

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 913–914)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: yes

(xxviii) Mr Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con):

Last year, my right hon. Friend and I were elected on a clear manifesto pledge to reduce net migration to the tens of thousands. How will we be able to deliver on that pledge unless we leave the European Union?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 913–914)

Question type: open

Question attitude: negative

Response type: full evasion

(xxix) Charlotte Leslie (Bristol North West) (Con):

The EU's security is only as strong as its weakest border, so does the Prime Minister share my concerns not only over Chancellor Merkel's apparent legitimisation of President Erdogan's reservations about freedom of speech but crucially over her decision to liberalise restrictions on Turkish visas, given that that country has such a porous Syrian border and such booming identity fraud?

Cameron: First, it is certainly true that a country in the Schengen zone is only as strong as its weakest border—that is absolutely right—but we, of course, are not in the Schengen zone. Secondly, the Schengen zone has decided to offer visas to Turkish nationals, but we have not made that decision, and will not be making that decision. Let us remember, however, that a visa is not a right to go and live and work or reside; it is a right to visit, so let us also be clear that Turks with visas visiting Schengen countries do not have those rights or the right automatically to come to Britain. It is very important to get this clear.

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 916–917)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: no

(xxx) Charlotte Leslie (Bristol North West) (Con):

Is he concerned that currently Chancellor Merkel seems to be outstripping everyone in making the case for Brexit?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 916–917)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: full evasion

(xxxi) Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe) (Con):

Mrs Thatcher used occasionally to organise seminars for Ministers, with senior academics, for colleagues like me whose knowledge of modern science, she thought, needed to be improved. Will the Prime Minister contemplate similar seminars for some of his senior and very respected Cabinet colleagues with businessmen on the nature of international trade in today's world, because some very respected figures appear to believe that one simply turns up and sells goods and services that comply with British-made rules, and that they do not have to comply with any rules agreed with the country to which one is selling.

Cameron: I always listen very carefully to my right hon. and learned Friend and will consider such seminars. I hope they will not be as frightening as seminars sometimes used to be under Margaret Thatcher. I remember that one of the very first times I met her, I was responsible for trade and industry research. She asked me what the day's trade figures were and I did not know. I have never wanted the floor to open up and swallow me any more than at that moment. The point my right hon. and learned Friend makes, which is absolutely right, is that just because we have friendly relations with a country does not mean that we automatically get good trade relations. We are very pleased that President Obama is coming here this Friday, but it is worth noting that even though we have the friendliest relations with the United States of America, we currently cannot sell beef or lamb to it. The point is that we do not just need good relations; we need nailed down trade arrangements.

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 917–918)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(xxxii) Mr Kenneth Clarke (Rushcliffe) (Con):

Will he include<sup>2</sup> some of the many businessmen who are putting investment decisions on hold now because of the uncertainty about Brexit after 23 June, which illustrates the dangers we would run if we made our whole future trading arrangements with the outside world as uncertain as some people are trying to make them?

Cameron:

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<sup>2</sup> Referring to seminars mentioned in Clarke's previous question.



(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 917–918)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: full evasion

(xxxiii) Helen Goodman (Bishop Auckland) (Lab):

Some people think that the worst case that has been made so far to vote to leave the EU is the claim that England is an island. Will the Prime Minister tell the House the worst argument that he has heard from the Brexiters?

Cameron: I think it is probably that we would get out of the Eurovision song contest. Not only would that be incredibly sad, but given that Israel and Azerbaijan, and anyone anywhere near Europe seems to be able to enter—[Interruption.] Australia, too, so we are pretty safe from that one.

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, col 919)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: direct answer

(xxxiv) Mr Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con):

Will my right hon. Friend point out to President Obama that in a series of European Court judgments such as those in the cases of Davis and of Schrems, using EU data protection laws and the EU charter of fundamental rights, the EU has established its jurisdiction over our intelligence data and sought to prevent our intelligence sharing with the United States?

Cameron: I am sure that the President will take all of these calculations into account before saying anything that he might have to say. Let me just make two points. First of all, this decision is a decision for the British people, and the British people alone. We are sovereign in making this decision. Personally, I believe that we should listen to advice from friends and other countries, and I struggle to find a leader of any friendly country who thinks we should leave. My second point is that, when it comes to the United States, it is worth looking at what so many Treasury Secretaries have said, going back over Republican or Democrat Administrations. It may not be the determining factor for many people—or indeed for any people—but listening to what our friends in the world say is not a bad idea.

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 919–920)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xxxv) Mr Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con):

Will he therefore warn the President that if we vote remain, far from gaining influence in the EU the United States will lose control and influence over her closest ally?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 20 April 2016, vol 608, cols 919–920)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: full evasion

(xxxvi) Mr Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab):

With the United Kingdom facing its most momentous decision for a generation in eight weeks' time, does the Prime Minister think it makes more sense to listen to all our closest friends and allies around the world, or to a combination of French fascists, Nigel Farage and Vladimir Putin?

Cameron: I am glad the right hon. Gentleman takes the English pronunciation of Farage, rather than the poncey, foreign-sounding one that he seems to prefer—a thoroughly good thing. I think we should listen to our friends and our allies. Looking around the world, it is hard to find the leader of a country who wishes us well who wants us to do other than stay inside a reformed European Union.

(HC Eng 27 April 2016, vol 608, col 1427)

Question type: disjunctive  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: direct answer

(xxxvii) Emma Reynolds (Wolverhampton North East) (Lab):

Three years ago, my mother fell seriously ill while on holiday in France. Thanks to the French health service, she received excellent treatment and was unfortunately diagnosed with cancer, but she is doing well today thanks to our NHS. Millions of Brits travel to other EU countries every year and benefit, like my mum, from the European health insurance card. What would happen to the card should we vote to leave on 23 June?

Cameron: May I, on behalf of the whole House, wish the hon. Lady's mother well in her treatment from the NHS? The hon. Lady raises the important point that this is one of the benefits we now have. Many of us will have used it ourselves or with our own children and think we can make the system even better as we are. It is for those who want to leave the European Union to explain whether, if we were to leave, we would still be able to access this and other such systems, which are very handy for people when going about their holidays.

(HC Eng 27 April 2016, vol 608, cols 1431)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xxxviii) Dr Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con):

Whatever the outcome of the EU referendum, **does the Prime Minister agree that one thing that will never diminish is the mutual affection and admiration between Britain and our great ally, France?** Given that connection, will he pay tribute to the people who fought and won the Normandy campaign, such as the late Captain Paul Cash, the father of my hon. Friend the Member for Stone (Sir William Cash), who was killed fighting in Normandy at the age of 26

having won the Military Cross, and Sergeant Peter Carne, who, at 93, is at Westminster today, and who built the Bailey bridges that enabled the breakout from the Normandy beachhead and will receive the Légion d'honneur in a typically generous gesture from our French allies?

Cameron: I certainly join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to all those who served, particularly those who fell in that heroic campaign. One of the things I have been able to do as Prime Minister of which I am proudest was to go to the vigil on the 70th anniversary of our gliders preparing for the landings and to go to Gold beach to see the incredible work that was done. We should remember what they did and what it was that they gave their lives for, which was to achieve peace on our continent.

(HC Eng 27 April 2016, vol 608, col 1431)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: full evasion<sup>3</sup>

(xxxix) Alex Cunningham (Stockton North) (Lab):

Nifco UK manufactures components for Ford and Nissan cars and employs hundreds of people, including many from my constituency. I am sure the Prime Minister knows of the need for us all to get behind our manufacturing industry, but does he agree with Nifco's managing director, Mike Matthews, that it would be "business suicide" for the UK to leave the European Union?

Cameron: I think we should listen to all the business voices, particularly those in manufacturing, so many of whom say that we are better off in a reformed European Union. We get an enormous amount of investment, particularly from Japanese motor industries. I will be welcoming the Japanese Prime Minister here to the UK tomorrow, when I am sure this will be on the agenda.

(HC Eng 4 May 2016, vol 609, col 167)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: no

(xl) Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con):

Four years ago, I asked my right hon. Friend on behalf of my mother, Maud, whether the EU referendum vote could be brought forward because of her age. She was then 100. She now wishes to know whether she needs to set a world record for longevity before the Chilcot report is published.

Cameron: I think that I can reassure Maud that this summer she will have a double opportunity to deal with these things, with a referendum on 23 June and the Chilcot report, which, I am sure, will come not too much longer after that.

(HC Eng 4 May 2016, vol 609, col 169)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

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<sup>3</sup> The analysed question is bolded; only this question from Dr Lewis relates to the referendum. Cameron fully evades the bolded question and only responds to the question coming after it.

Response type: indirect answer

(xli) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

We are fully aware that the European Union has strengthened workers' rights in many ways. In March, while the Prime Minister was trying to undermine workers' rights with his Trade Union Bill, the European Commission put forward proposals to close loopholes in the posting of workers directive that would stop employers exploiting foreign workers and undercutting national rates of pay. Will the Prime Minister confirm that his Government will protect workers and back these reforms to stop the undercutting and the grotesque exploitation of many workers across the continent?

Cameron: On the posted workers directive, we are looking at this matter closely and working with our partners. We see some merit in what is proposed. I can tell the right hon. Gentleman today that the yellow card procedure has been invoked by national Parliaments over this, demonstrating the importance of these sorts of safeguards, even more of which we achieved in my renegotiation. The best thing that we can do for workers' rights in this country is to celebrate the national living wage, introduced by a Tory Government.

(HC Eng 11 May 2016, vol 609, cols 616–617)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: yes

(xlii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

My question was about the posting of workers directive proposals, which would prevent the grotesque exploitation by unscrupulous employers of workers being moved from one nation to another to undercut wages in the second nation. Will the Prime Minister be absolutely clear: will the British Government support this very important reform to stop this exploitation?

Cameron: As I have said, we are working with the Dutch presidency. We think there is merit in a lot of the proposals, but we want to make sure we get the details right.

(HC Eng 11 May 2016, vol 609, col 617)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: no

(xliii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

Yes seems to be one of the hardest words for the Prime Minister to say. For the third time, will he just say whether or not he supports the posting of workers directive?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 11 May 2016, vol 609, cols 617–618)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral  
Response type: full evasion

(xliv) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

He might be aware that Patrick Minford, a former economic adviser to Margaret Thatcher, said that the European Union has a negative effect on the City of London and that he wants the “shackles” of European regulation removed. Does the Prime Minister believe that our membership hurts the City of London or does he believe that European Union regulation of the finance sector in Britain and British-administered tax havens help curb the sort of bad practice exposed by the Panama papers and underlined by my hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe and Sale East (Mike Kane) in his earlier question?

Cameron: This is an area where we basically agree with each other about the European Union, so I will try to identify a question in that lot and answer it as positively as I can. First, I completely disagree with the economist Patrick Minford. He wants to see manufacturing industry in our country obliterated. It would be a disastrous step if we followed the advice that he gives. On the City of London, we need the right regulation for the City of London to continue its massive rate of job creation and wealth creation in our country, but we also need to remain members of the single market because it is absolutely vital for this important sector of our economy. I hope that on that, as on the issue of the national living wage, we can find some agreement between us.

(HC Eng 11 May 2016, vol 609, cols 617–618)

Question type: disjunctive  
Question attitude: positive  
Response type: subtle evasion  
Overt/covert evasion: covert  
Agenda shift: yes

(xlv) Hywel Williams (Arfon) (PC):

The Prime Minister has confirmed to me that should we leave the EU, the European convergence funding for the very poorest parts of Wales would of course cease. Will he now confirm that in such a case the UK Government would make up the difference?

Cameron: The point I would make to the hon. Gentleman, as I would to anyone asking a question about what happens were we to leave, is that I do not think you can give a guarantee. I am a profound believer in our United Kingdom. I want to go on making sure that poorer regions and parts of our country are properly supported. If, as I think is the case, we find that our economy would be hit by leaving and our tax receipts would be hit by leaving, that is obviously going to impact the amount of funding that we can put into agriculture, research or, indeed, poorer parts of our country. That is why I think the safe, sensible and right option is to vote to remain in a reformed European Union.

(HC Eng 11 May 2016, vol 609, col 626)

Question type: closed  
Question attitude: positive  
Response type: indirect answer

(xlv) Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con):

May I support the Prime Minister on his comments about Nigeria and Afghanistan, and ask him to stop pouring hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money into those and other corrupt countries until they have cleaned up their act?

Cameron: I thank, as ever, my hon. Friend for his help and support, and for his tips on diplomacy as well, which are useful given the past 24 hours. I would say to him that the leaders of countries such as Nigeria and Afghanistan are battling hard against very corrupt systems and countries. In both their cases they have made some remarkable steps forward, and that is why I am so keen to welcome them to the anti-corruption conference in London. Where I part company with my hon. Friend is that I do not think it would be right to withdraw the aid that we give because, frankly, problems in those countries come back and haunt us here, whether they are problems of migration or problems of terrorism and all the rest of it. We are a country involved in a dangerous global world, and I see our aid budget, at 0.7%, alongside our defence budget, at 2% of our GDP, as ways of keeping us safe and prosperous in a dangerous world, as well as ways of fulfilling our important moral responsibilities.

(HC Eng 11 May 2016, vol 609, col 626)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: indirect answer

(xlvii) Philip Davies (Shipley) (Con):

While he is at it, will he tell us where he has the European Union in his league table of corruption, given that it has not had its accounts signed off for 20 years?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 11 May 2016, vol 609, col 626)

Question type: open

Question attitude: negative

Response type: full evasion

(xlviii) Mims Davies (Eastleigh) (Con):

Emily Davison died on 8 June 1913. Yesterday, we commemorated women's suffrage and the importance of votes for women—and women voting for women, of course. Thousands wanted to register to vote yesterday but were unable to due to massive demand. Will the PM update the House on what he is doing to ensure that everyone has the chance to register to vote and can do so in this vital vote for a generation?

Cameron: First of all, let me join my hon. Friend in remembering what the suffragettes stood for, what they achieved and the fact that we achieved universal suffrage in this country. She raises voter registration and I am sure that the whole House will want to know what the situation is. Look, it is extremely welcome that so many people want to take part in this massive democratic exercise and in this vital decision for our country. Last night, there was record demand on the gov.uk website from people concerned that they might not be registered to vote in the referendum, which overloaded the system. I am clear that people should continue to register today. The Electoral Commission made a statement this morning, urging the Government to consider options that would effectively extend the deadline, which should include legislative options, and we are doing

that and discussing it with the commission today. We are working urgently with it to do just that and to ensure that those who register today and those who registered last night will be able to vote in the EU referendum.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1180–1181)

Question type: open

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: direct answer

(xlix) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

The case of Sports Direct shows that Mike Ashley certainly is not Father Christmas. Indeed, he makes Scrooge look like a good employer. I think we should commend Unite the union and its members for exposing what went on. It shows that we must strengthen, not weaken, workers' rights, particularly when criminal activity is involved. However, the Government's Employment Minister, the right hon. Member for Witham (Priti Patel), said that if we leave Europe, "we could just halve the burdens of the EU social and employment legislation". Perhaps the Prime Minister can help us. Does she speak on behalf of the Government when she promises to reduce the "burdens", as she describes them, of employment legislation, or on behalf of whom does she speak?

Cameron: The Government are in favour of staying in a reformed European Union because we are stronger, safer and better off. One reason that many people will want to stay in the European Union is that they believe it provides an underpinning of rights for workers and employment rights. I would make the point, in addition, that we in this House have repeatedly chosen to go over and above those rights: we have had the right to request flexible working for all workers since 2014; we went well beyond the EU directive on maternity leave by giving 52 weeks' maternity leave; we have provided shared parental leave; and we give eight days more annual leave to full-time workers than the EU working time directive. I believe that this modern, compassionate Conservative Government have an excellent record on these things, underpinned by our membership of the European Union.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1182)

Question type: disjunctive

Question attitude: positive

Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: overt

Agenda shift: yes

(l) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

I am very pleased that the Prime Minister backs the amendment, but I hope that he backs it to ensure that it goes through. Another issue that I raised with him a couple of weeks ago is the anger over tax avoidance that exists all over this country and indeed all over the western world. I agree that we are more likely to make progress on tax avoidance inside the European Union than outside it, but his Members of the European Parliament have not been supporting country-by-country tax transparency, which would force companies to publish their tax payments in each country in which they operate. Will he now tell us when that will be supported by his MEPs...

Cameron: I would argue that no Government have done more nationally to crack down on tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. I would also argue that no Government have done more internationally to bring this up the international agenda: I made it the centrepiece at the G8; we have driven change in the OECD; and we are now driving change in the European Union. Let me confirm that my MEPs do support country-by-country reporting, and they have said that over and again, and I am happy to repeat it again today.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1183)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: indirect answer  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(li) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

...and when it will go through so that we can close down just one of the many tax loopholes that currently exist?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1183)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: full evasion

(lii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

I am really pleased that the Prime Minister's MEPs support this transparency; we are all delighted about that. I just hope that they get round to voting for it when the opportunity comes up, because that would certainly help. He will be aware that Labour's position is that we want to stay in the European Union to improve workers' rights, tackle exploitation, and drive down tax evasion and tax avoidance, but we are concerned that those issues are not the priorities of members of his Government and his party, such as the hon. Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), and the right hon. Members for Surrey Heath and for Witham. They are talking about trying to destroy any of the social advances made within the European Union. Does he talk to them about that at any time?

Cameron: Here I am trying to be so consensual. I am doing my best. I could mention that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Ms Stuart) was out yesterday spinning for Nigel Farage, but I do not want to play that game. I want to stress the unity of purpose that exists, particularly over the issue of tax evasion, because there is a serious point here. What we have in prospect in the European Union, in part because of British action, is the idea of saying that if large foreign multinationals want to invest in the European Union, they will have to report their country-by-country tax arrangements not just in Europe, but all over the world. That could drive a huge change in some of these very large companies in which there are great concerns. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman and I can unite and say that this would be a good thing, as it shows that when Britain pushes an agenda in Europe it wins, and it wins for our citizens.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1183–1184)



Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: intermediate response

(liii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

Do they speak for themselves or for him and his Government?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1184)

Question type: disjunctive  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: full evasion

(liv) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

If they speak for themselves, how are they Ministers at the same time?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1184)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: full evasion

(lv) Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con):

The Prime Minister has repeatedly stated that he secured changes to reform the EU. Will he now confirm that, on 23 June, the voters are not guaranteed any treaty change in EU law as no treaty change was achieved despite a promise to deliver one, and that an international agreement cannot change EU law?

Cameron: I know that my hon. Friend has very strong views on this issue, and I have very strong views on it, too. On the specific point that he raises, I am afraid that he is not correct. In the renegotiation, we secured two vital treaty changes: one on getting Britain out of ever-closer union; and the other on the protection for our currency.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1184)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: indirect answer

(lvi) Richard Drax (South Dorset) (Con):

Finally, will he stop denigrating our great country, because it is a sign, if any were needed, that he is losing the argument?

Cameron: I do not accept for one minute that supporting Britain being a member of a reformed European Union is in any way doing our country down. If you love your country, you want it to be strong in the world. If you love your country, you want opportunities for your young people. If you love your country, you do not want to act in a way that could lead to its break-up. That is why what I want to see is not Nigel Farage's little England, but a strong Britain in Europe.

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: indirect answer

(Ivii) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

Last week, thousands of dead from both sides in the battle of Jutland were remembered in commemorations in which the Prime Minister joined the First Minister, the Princess Royal and the President of Germany, along with thousands of other people, on Orkney to remember the tragedy of so many people losing their life. European co-operation emerged from both world wars as the best way to secure peace, so does the Prime Minister agree that we should never take peace and security for granted, and that that is a strong reason to remain in the European Union?

Cameron: The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. There were very moving scenes as we stood on that cemetery ground, with the British and German frigates in the background together in Scapa Flow—a sight that I will not forget—as we commemorated and remembered how many people lost their lives. I want to be clear about this: the words “world war three” have never passed my lips, let me reassure everyone of that—[Interruption.] Of course, they have now; well spotted. But can we really take for granted the security and stability we enjoy today, when we know that our continent has been racked by so many conflicts in the past? Like all Conservatives, I would always give the greatest credit to NATO for keeping the peace, but I think that it has always been a Conservative view that the European Union has played its role as well.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1184–1185)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: direct answer

(Iviii) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

This is not about world war three, but about the realities—the facts. There have been wars on the European continent, but outside the European Union; they have happened in the Balkans, in Ukraine and in the Caucasus. It is a fact that there has never been a single example of armed conflict between member states of the European Union. Will the Prime Minister, in the little time that is left ahead of the European referendum, take the time to stress the positive advantages of co-operation, peace and stability for us all, and not just of the single market or the rights we have as citizens? Peace and prosperity are an advantage to us all, and that is why we should remain in the European Union.

Cameron: I very much take on what the right hon. Gentleman says. I think that the strongest argument for the Government’s position of wanting us to stay is that we would be better off, and that that market of 500 million people is essential for our businesses. The argument that I was just making—that we will be stronger in the world, in terms of getting things done for Britain and for our citizens—is important, but the argument that we are safer and more secure because the European Union is a means for dialogue between countries that were previously adversaries is one that I never forget. However frustrating it can get around that table with 27 other Prime

Ministers and Presidents, I never forget that these are countries that were previously in conflict. Now, we talk, we discuss, we argue and we decide, and that is a far better way of doing things.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1185)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: direct answer  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(lix) Karl M<sup>c</sup>Cartney (Lincoln) (Con):

The European Union recently admitted that it now has a black hole in its finances of €24.7 billion—about £19 billion. Eighteen months ago my right hon. Friend declared that he would not pay the EU a £1.7 billion surcharge—effectively a fine on British taxpayers for growing our economy—yet he was later forced to pay up. What reassurance can he give the House that hard-working British taxpayers will not be forced to pour money into that EU black hole if our nation votes to remain in the European Union?

Cameron: The reassurance that I can give my hon. Friend is that we fixed the European budget for a seven-year period between 2014 and 2020, and we fixed a total for that budget that was lower than for the previous seven-year period, which means that European budgets are going to go down, not up. That cannot be changed. This is a very important point. That overall ceiling of spending is determined by all 28 Prime Ministers and Presidents. There is a veto over changing it, just as there is a veto over the British rebate. The only person who can give up the British rebate is the British Prime Minister, and as long as I am Prime Minister there is absolutely no prospect of that happening.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1186)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: direct answer

(lx) Karl M<sup>c</sup>Cartney (Lincoln) (Con):

Does he, like me, accept that our only option to halt such payments is for our constituents to vote to leave the EU on 23 June?

Cameron: As my hon. Friend ended his question with a remark, I will end my answer with a remark: there is no expert saying that we would make a saving from leaving the EU. The only black hole would be in our public finances, because we would have a smaller economy and lower tax receipts, so we would either have to cut spending or put up taxes to make up for that fact.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1186)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: negative  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(lxi) Helen Goodman (Bishop Auckland) (Lab):

With industrialists such as GlaxoSmithKline and Hitachi warning that if we left the EU, jobs would be lost, the Brexit economist Patrick Minford has revealed that under his side's strategy, manufacturing would be mostly eliminated. Will the Prime Minister join me in calling on the Brexit leaders to say how many other people's jobs they would sacrifice on the altar of their own political ambitions?

Cameron: The hon. Lady makes an important point, which is that one of the reasons why international companies such as Hitachi invest in Britain—of course, we also have excellent labour relations, the English language, and a very hard-working workforce and great engineers—is that we are members of the single market. I thought that what the head of Hitachi said this week about wanting us to be the European headquarters, and to manufacture those trains in the north-east and sell them all over Europe, and how that might not be possible if we were to leave, was an incredibly powerful statement. In my clear view, jobs come first, and if people want to vote for jobs, they should vote for remain on 23 June.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1187)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: overt

Agenda shift: yes

(Ixii) Neil Carmichael (Stroud) (Con):

Speaking at many universities, colleges and schools across England, and at events organised by Universities UK, University Alliance and the Russell Group, I have been struck by young people's strong interest in remaining in the European Union. Does the Prime Minister agree that Britain should take a firm lead in the European Union to promote the interests of young people's careers and research, and their opportunities in the future more generally?

Cameron: I think our universities have been pretty much unanimous in recommending that we vote to remain in the EU. I think that is partly because of the opportunities young people will have from being part of a single market of 500 million people, but also because our universities do very well out of research funding that helps to create the businesses and jobs of the future. We contribute about 11% of the EU research budget, but receive about 16% of the allocated funding. Staying in Europe is good for students' opportunities, good for young people's opportunities and good for our science base.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016 vol 611, cols 1187–1188)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(Ixiii) Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con):

The beauty of a referendum is that every voter has an equal voice, every vote carries equal weight, and Members of Parliament have no moral or political superiority over anybody else. Does my right hon. Friend accept that the referendum is not a consultation but an instruction to Parliament from the British people? Is it not therefore incumbent on all of us to accept in advance

that remain would mean remain and leave would mean leave, and that any attempt to short-change or distort the verdict of the British people would be a democratic outrage?

Cameron: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right: every vote counts the same. We have asked the British people for their opinion, and we should treat their decision as an instruction to deliver. I know many people would like me to be a bit more nuanced in what I think, and to say there are two options that both have some merits and that it is a balanced decision. That might have made my life easier, but the problem is that I do not believe it. I very strongly believe that we are better off if we stay in. That is why the Government and I are saying so clearly to the British people: better off, stronger, safer. But in the end, it is the British people's decision.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1188)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: direct answer

Overt/covert evasion: overt

Agenda shift: yes

(lxiv) Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con):

What the Prime Minister said today on Europe is right: we have to go and campaign. I remember, Mr Speaker, what you said yesterday about notifying Members if one is going to visit their constituency, so may I say to the Prime Minister that a group of global-looking leave campaigners will be descending on Witney at lunch time this Sunday? I will be there. Will the Prime Minister be able to join us?

Cameron: First, I am very sorry that I will not be able to meet my hon. Friend—I am making an appearance on the “Andrew Marr” programme on Sunday—but I would recommend that he goes to The Fleece pub in Witney and spends as much time and as much money as he can there, rather than on anything else.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1189)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: direct answer

(lxv) Mr Peter Bone (Wellingborough) (Con):

Given what he has just said, will he confirm that if the country votes to leave, he will be able to stay on as Prime Minister and negotiate the exit?

Cameron:

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1189)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: full evasion

(lxvi) Robert Neill (Bromley and Chislehurst) (Con):

The largest single source of employment and wealth in my constituency is the London-based financial services market. Does the Prime Minister agree that the opportunity to continue trading

freely in a single market in financial services of 500 million people and a completed capital markets union is an unparalleled and optimistic opportunity for my constituents, and one that no sensible businessman would ever turn his back on?

Cameron: My hon. Friend makes an important point. Here, it really is worth understanding exactly what this single market means: it means that a financial services company based in the UK effectively has a passport to trade in 27 other EU countries. If we are to leave, and if we leave the single market, we lose that passport right, so, by definition, many of the firms would have to relocate at least some of their staff to another European Union country. HSBC has said it would have to scrap 1,000 jobs. JPMorgan said it would have to scrap 4,000 jobs. Lloyd's came out and said that many jobs in insurance would be under threat. This is a concrete example of why the single market matters. I would make the point—because this does not just affect my hon. Friend's constituency—that two thirds of the jobs in financial services are outside London, and this accounts for 7% of our economy, so when experts warn of effects on jobs, growth and livelihoods in our country, this is a classic example of why they are right to make that case.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1190)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxvii) Stephen Kinnock (Aberavon) (Lab):

Does the Prime Minister agree that a vote to leave on 23 June would be a hammer blow for the British steel industry? Will he agree to meet me to discuss a number of the decisions being made in the context of the Tata sale process—imminent decisions that will have a huge impact on thousands of jobs in my constituency and right across the country?

Cameron: I am working very closely with the hon. Gentleman, as is my right hon. Friend the Business Secretary, to help do everything we can to secure a future for Tata Steel. The sales process is progressing, and that is encouraging. I would say that, yes, for steel, we are better off inside the European Union, because together as 28 countries, we are far better able to stand up to the Chinese or, indeed, the Americans over dumped steel. Where we put in place those dumping tariffs, you can see 95%, 98%, and 99% reductions in the quantity of Chinese steel in those categories being imported into the EU. We still face a very difficult situation—there is still massive overcapacity — but we are definitely, for the steel industry, better off as part of this organisation, fighting for British steelworkers' jobs.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1190–1191)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxviii) Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con):

Will the Prime Minister address an issue that the remain camp has so far fudged? Our present immigration policy, in all truthfulness, cannot control numbers coming in from the EU to the benefit of our public services, and also actually discriminates against the rest of the world outside the EU.

Cameron: Having spent my evening yesterday with Mr Farage—or Farridge, as I like to call him—I am confused about what the leave camp actually wants when it comes to immigration. I thought it wanted less immigration, but now it seems to want more immigration from outside the EU into our country. My view is that we should restrict welfare in the way that we have negotiated, so that people have to come and work here for four years before they get full access to our welfare system—no more “something for nothing”; people pay in before they get out—and then we should focus on proper controls on migration from outside the EU, on which we have made some progress over recent years and can do some more. That is the right answer. As for the alternative of an Australian points system, if we look at Australia, it has twice as much immigration per head as we have here in the UK. That is not the right answer for Britain.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, col 1191)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: indirect answer

(Ixi) Helen Whately (Faversham and Mid Kent) (Con):

Last week I was delighted to welcome my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to Faversham in my constituency to visit our largest local employer, Shepherd Neame. There, we heard that having a strong and stable economy is vital for the ongoing success of Britain’s oldest brewery. Does he agree that leaving the European Union would put in jeopardy that strong economy, and with it British businesses, British jobs, and British livelihoods?

Cameron: My hon. Friend is right. Shepherd Neame, which is the oldest brewery in the country, could not have been clearer about wanting to stay in a reformed European Union, because it wants a strong and successful economy, it wants to be part of a single market, and it recognises that that is in our interests. She and I very much enjoyed the pint of Spitfire we had at about 10.30 in the morning—the things we have to do to win this argument. But we have an absolute commitment to carry it through.

(HC Eng 8 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1191–1192)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(Ixx) Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con):

The Australian parent company of Sealite United Kingdom Ltd see Europe as a major market for expansion, but it has put on hold its plans to build a factory in the enterprise zone at the South Lowestoft industrial estate. Lowestoft has enormous potential as a centre serving the European maritime market, but does the Prime Minister share my concern that this opportunity would unnecessarily be placed at risk if the UK leaves the EU?

Cameron: I certainly share my hon. Friend’s concern. I well remember visiting his constituency and seeing what a thriving business location Lowestoft is. He is right that many companies come to Britain and invest in Britain for many reasons, but one of the most important is access to the single market of 500 million customers. Next week we have the opportunity to put our place in that single market beyond doubt, and I hope that we wake up on 24 June knowing that businesses are

going to invest more in our country, create more jobs in our country and see more growth in our country, because that will help the families of our country. The unemployment figures today show another welcome fall. We can see continued progress—let's keep our country moving forward.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1748)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(lxxi) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

Three years ago, there was a cross-party agreement for the implementation of section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 and to proceed with Leveson 2 once criminal prosecutions were concluded. The Prime Minister will be aware that today there is a lobby of Parliament by the victims of phone hacking. He said a few years ago that “we all did too much cosying up to Rupert Murdoch”. Well, some of his Tory Brexit colleagues are certainly cosying up to Rupert Murdoch at the moment, but will he give a commitment today that he will meet the victims of press intrusion and assure them that he will keep his promise on this?

Cameron: First, let me echo what the right hon. Gentleman said about the Orlando bombings. In terms of the Leveson issue, we said that we would make a decision about the second stage of this inquiry once the criminal investigations and prosecutions were out of the way. They are still continuing, so that is the situation there. I have met victims of press intrusion, and I am happy to do so again. Right now, people can accuse me of many things, but I think that cosying up to Rupert Murdoch probably is not one of them.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1749)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: intermediate response

(lxxii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

My question was, “Will the Prime Minister meet the victims of phone hacking?” I hope he will, because they deserve it, and he promised that he would. A major funder of the leave campaign has said: “If it were up to me, I’d privatise the NHS.” The hon. Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson) has said: “If people have to pay for” NHS services “they will value them more.” Both he and the right hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Michael Gove) are members of a Government who have put the NHS into record deficit. These people are now masquerading as the saviours of the NHS—wolves in sheep’s clothing. Did not the hon. Member for Totnes (Dr Wollaston) get it right when she rejected the duplicity of this argument in the leave campaign and decided to join the remain campaign?

Cameron: I was delighted with what my hon. Friend the Member for Totnes (Dr Wollaston) said about changing her mind, which is a brave thing for politicians to do, and saying that she thought that the NHS would be safer if we remained inside a reformed European Union. I believe that very profoundly, because the key to a strong NHS is a strong economy. I think there cannot be any doubt, with nine out of 10 economists, the Governor of the Bank of England, the International



Monetary Fund, the OECD and all these other organisations saying that our economy will be stronger, and it is a strong economy that delivers a strong NHS.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1749–1750)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxxiii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

With just eight days to go before the referendum, the Labour position is that we are going to be voting to remain because we believe it is the best way to protect families, protect jobs and protect public services. We would oppose any post-Brexit austerity Budget, just as we have opposed each austerity Budget put forward by this Government. Will the Prime Minister take this opportunity to condemn the opportunism of 57 of his colleagues who are pro-leave—these are Members who backed the bedroom tax, backed cutting disability benefits and backed slashing care for the elderly—who have suddenly had a damascene conversion to the anti-austerity movement? Does he have any message for them at all?

Cameron: There are very few times when the right hon. Gentleman and I are on the same side of an argument. For people watching at home, when the leader of the Labour party—and, indeed, almost all the Labour party—a Conservative Government, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens, the official Ulster Unionists and the Scottish National party all say, “We have huge disagreements, but on this vital issue for the future of our country, the best option for Britain is to vote to remain in a reformed European Union,” that really says something. The truth is this. This is a huge choice for our country, and choices have consequences. If we wake up on 24 June and find that we have remained in, our economy can continue to move forward. If we vote out, the experts warn us that we will have a smaller economy, less employment, lower wages and, therefore, lower tax receipts. That is why we would have to have measures to address a huge hole in our public finances. Nobody wants to have an emergency Budget. Nobody wants to have cuts in public services. Nobody wants to have tax increases. But I would say this: there is only one thing worse than addressing a crisis in your public finances through a Budget, and that is ignoring it. If you ignore a crisis in your public finances, you see your economy go into a tailspin and you see confidence in your country reduced. We can avoid all this by voting remain next week.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1751–1752)

Question type: open

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxxiv) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

We are now only a week away from the biggest question that the UK has faced in a long time—continuing membership of the European Union. Exports of goods and services from the Scottish economy are massively important: hundreds of thousands of jobs depend on them. Meanwhile, our public services, including the NHS, are supported by many hard-working people from elsewhere in the European Union. Does the Prime Minister agree with me that if we want to

protect jobs and if we want to protect our public services, we must vote to remain in the European Union?

Cameron: I believe that the most important argument—there are many arguments people make, but this is the most important—is about the future of our economy. It seems obvious to me: you can listen to the experts, or you can just make a common-sense argument. Today, we have full access to a market of 500 million people. For an economy such as Scotland’s, which is such a big exporting economy, there is no way we would get a better deal on the outside of the single market than we get on the inside, so if we left we would see our economy suffer, we would see jobs suffer and we would see people’s livelihoods suffer. That is just plain common sense. I absolutely agree with the right hon. Gentleman that for jobs and for livelihoods, we should remain in. There is a consequence for the public finances, because if our economy is doing less well, our public finances would be doing less well, and that would have consequences for Scotland, too.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1752–1753)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

Overt/covert evasion: overt

Agenda shift: yes

(lxxv) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

May I raise that issue with the Prime Minister? Today, we have learned from a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer and a former Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer that there would likely be £30 billion of cuts to public services or tax rises were there to be a Brexit vote. What impact would that have on public services in Scotland? Please can we learn now, before we vote, what impact that would have on the budget in Scotland, which pays for the NHS in Scotland, for our schools in Scotland, for local government and for all key public services? Is that not yet another reason why we must vote to remain in the European Union?

Cameron: These figures are not based on what the Chancellor of the Exchequer is saying; they are based on what the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research are saying. They are talking about a £20 billion to £40 billion hole in our public finances if Brexit were to go ahead. Those organisations are often quoted across this House—many times against the Government—because they are respected for their independence. Clearly, if that is the impact on the public finances, decisions to cut public spending in the UK Budget do have an impact, through Barnett, on Scotland. To anyone who says, “Well, these warnings could of course be wrong, or they could be inaccurate”, I would make the point—it is perhaps an uncomfortable one for the right hon. Gentleman—that there were of course warnings about the oil price before the Scottish referendum, and it turned out actually to be worse than the experts warned.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1753)

Question type: open

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxxvi) Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con):

Since the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, many of my constituents are worried that remaining in the EU increases the risk of terrorism, fears exacerbated by the disgraceful comments of people such as Nigel Farage. Does my right hon. Friend agree with me that our security services are helped, not hindered, by the EU?

Cameron: I would say very directly to my hon. Friend that I have done this job for six years and, working with the Home Secretary, I have seen how closely our intelligence and security services work with other services around the world. Of course we keep ourselves safe by investing in anti-terrorism policing and of course we keep ourselves safe by the way we work with the Americans and the “Five Eyes” partnership, but I am in no doubt that the increasing extent of information exchange and intelligence exchange that takes place through the European Union is of direct benefit to our country. It is not just that you need a border; you also need information and intelligence to police that border properly. We are now seeing an enormous amount of exchange about criminal records, terrorist records and passenger name records. Of course, outside the EU, we could try to negotiate our way back into some of those agreements, but right now we are in them, we are driving them and we are making them keep people safe in our country.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1753–1754)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxxvii) Mr George Howarth (Knowsley) (Lab):

Knowsley is expecting to receive £10 million in EU funding over the next three years. EU funding has helped attract businesses to the borough, including QVC, which created 2,500 jobs. Is it not the case that that important funding from the EU could be lost if we vote next week to leave the European Union?

Cameron: The right hon. Gentleman makes an important point. All the independent economic reports say very clearly that there is no financial saving from leaving the EU. The Institute for Fiscal Studies put it like this: “we conclude that leaving the EU would not...leave more money to spend on the NHS. Rather it would leave us spending less on public services, or taxing more, or borrowing more.” I would argue that there is a big dividend from remaining inside the EU, which we would start to feel next Friday, as companies would be able to see that Britain had made a decision, and the job creators, wealth creators and international investors would know that Britain meant business and they would invest in our country. There is no saving from leaving. That is what the experts agree.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1754)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxxviii) Roger Mullin (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath) (SNP):

Thomas and Elke Westen live and run their businesses in Kirkcaldy, but, as Germans, they are denied a vote next week. They are hurt by the portrayal of immigrants in the EU debate. They leave for France on Sunday and are considering leaving permanently if we exit the EU. Will the

Prime Minister join my call for them and others in a similar situation to stay, as they are highly valued?

Cameron: Of course, there are many people who come to our country, work hard, make a contribution and help to build our communities. It is important to get the numbers into some sort of perspective. I think 5% of our population are EU nationals—Italians, Germans, Poles, Spaniards and the rest of it—so if you stop 100 people in the street, only five will be EU nationals. It is just as the hon. Gentleman said. Look at our NHS—there are 50,000 EU nationals working as doctors, nurses and care assistants. Look at our care homes—there are 60,000 EU nationals helping to look after our elderly relatives with dementia and other conditions as they come towards the end of their lives. Yes, we need to make sure that people who come here work and make a contribution, but we should celebrate the contribution they make.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1754–1755)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(lxxix) Carolyn Harris (Swansea East) (Lab):

Many in my constituency of Swansea East are already struggling to make ends meet. The World Trade Organisation says that if we leave the EU we could face major tariffs on trade, and would have to renegotiate more than 160 trade agreements. Does the Prime Minister agree that leaving the EU would hit hard-working families the most by raising the cost of living, and that it is too big a risk to take?

Cameron: The hon. Lady is right. It is always the poorest and those with the least who get hit hardest if an economy suffers a recession. There are two ways in which the cost of living could be impacted. She is absolutely right that if we leave the single market and go to World Trade Organisation rules, tariffs will be imposed on the goods we sell to Europe, which would make us suffer. Also, if the pound falls, as many independent experts forecast, the cost of living rises, the cost of the family shop rises and the cost of the family holiday rises. She is right that it is not worth the risk. We should not risk it—we should keep our country safe.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1755)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(lxxx) Ruth Smeeth (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Lab):

Some 2,500 people are employed in the ceramics industry in my constituency. Their jobs are dependent on EU trade, their rights are protected by the EU social charter, and their town centres have been rebuilt with EU funds. With his friends in the leave campaign producing more spin than a potter's wheel, does the Prime Minister share my fears that despite Europe's flaws, a Brexit vote could leave us picking up the pieces of a broken economy for years to come?

Cameron: I will nick that soundbite—it's a good one. The hon. Lady is right. If we leave the single market and the European Union, the Council President has said clearly that that process probably takes two years, and after that we will have to negotiate a trade deal with the European Union. If that

trade deal is like Canada's, it could take seven years. We are looking at a decade of uncertainty for our economy. On the ceramics industry, I am advised by my Parliamentary Private Secretary, who before coming to this House did a worthwhile job of working in that industry—  
 [Interruption.] He may not be spinning pots any more, but he is spinning for me very effectively. Last year we exported £38 million in porcelain and china to the EU. If we were outside the EU without a trade deal and had World Trade Organisation tariffs, there would be a 12% tax. I do not want us to hit British manufacturers, car makers and aeroplane makers. We should be investing in and supporting those industries, not making their situation more difficult, which Brexit would undoubtedly do.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1756)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: direct answer

(lxxxix) Robert Jenrick (Newark) (Con):

Thirty years ago when I was just a little lad—[Hon. Members: “Aah”] Thirty years ago, my parents quit their jobs and founded a small manufacturing business around our kitchen table. Today, British manufacturers—particularly small businesses—are worried because if we leave the European Union, they will continue to make their products to common European standards because they value the free market. They value the single market and want to export, but they are aware that the United Kingdom will have no say whatsoever in the formulation of those standards, and their competitive advantage will be destroyed. What advice does my right hon. Friend have for my parents and for small businesses and the millions of jobs that depend on them across the country?

Cameron: I had always assumed that my hon. Friend was under 30, so I am shocked to get that news. He makes an important point. If we were to leave the EU, we would lose the seat around the table that sets the rules of the single market. Of course sometimes those rules can be annoying or burdensome, but at the end of the day those are the rules we have to meet. If we leave and have no say over those rules, we do not gain control, we lose it. That is a crucial argument, and it is why the majority of small businesses—as well as a very large majority of larger businesses—back staying in the EU.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1756–1757)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(lxxxii) Dr Alasdair McDonnell (Belfast South) (SDLP):

I assure the Prime Minister that the SDLP is fully behind him in his efforts to secure a remain vote. The Brexit campaigners have made securing our borders their resounding war cry, but when it comes to the only land border between the UK and the rest of the EU we are dismissed and told that nothing will change there. A return to customs posts, passport checks and a hard border will be a critical economic issue for Northern Ireland's voters in eight days' time. Will the Prime

Minister now, once and for all, clarify this point and tell the people of Northern Ireland what will become of the border if the UK votes to leave the European Union?

Cameron: If we vote to stay in, we know what the situation is: we know that the common travel area works, we know it can continue and everyone can have confidence in that. If we were to leave—the leave campaigners want to make a big issue about our borders—we will have a land border between Britain outside the European Union and the Republic of Ireland inside the European Union. Therefore, you can only have new border controls between the Republic and Northern Ireland or, which I would regret hugely, you would have to have some sort of checks on people as they left Belfast or other parts of Northern Ireland to come to the rest of the United Kingdom. We can avoid these risks. There are so many risks here: risks to our children’s jobs, risks to our economic future, risks to our borders, risks to the unity of the United Kingdom. I say: avoid the risks and vote remain next Thursday.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1757)

Question type: open

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(lxxxiii) Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con):

Next week, I will be visiting 25 schools in my constituency to explain both sides of the EU referendum argument to those of our population who will be the most heavily impacted by a decision they cannot make. Does the Prime Minister have any words for these young people for the remain segment?

Cameron: I am very grateful for my hon. Friend’s hard work. What I would say is that, even if those people in our schools are not able to vote, this will affect their futures. I hope that, after being inspired by my hon. Friend, they will talk to their parents and their grandparents about wanting to grow up in a country with opportunity, and we are bound to have more opportunities if we remain in a reformed European Union with 27 other countries. I also think it goes to a point about what sort of country we want our children to grow up in; not just one of economic and job opportunities, but one where our country is able to effect change and get things done in the world. We do not diminish ourselves inside a European Union; we enhance the power of Britain and the greatness of our country.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1757)

Question type: open

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(lxxxiv) Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke) (Con):

I agreed with the Prime Minister on Europe when he said to the CBI on 9 November last year: “Some people seem to say that really Britain couldn’t survive, couldn’t do okay outside the European Union. I don’t think that is true...The argument isn’t whether Britain could survive outside the EU; of course it could.” So if, as I hope, despite the panic-driven negativity from the remain camp in Downing Street, the British people vote next week to become a free and

independent nation again, will my right hon. Friend join me in embracing the great optimism and opportunity for our country and our people that such a momentous decision would bring?

Cameron: As I said at the CBI, of course Britain can survive outside the EU—no one is questioning that. The question is: how are we going to do best? How are we going to create the most jobs and investment, how are we going to have the most opportunities for our children, how are we going to wield the greatest power in the world, how are we going to get things done? On all those issues—stronger, safer, better off—the arguments are on the remain side.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1758)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: negative

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: overt

Agenda shift: yes

(lxxxv) Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD):

The wealthy elite fuelling the leave campaign will be unharmed by the inevitable hike in interest rates that will follow Britain's exit from the EU and the decline in sterling. The rate rise will, however, hit millions of ordinary British people. It will cause people to lose their homes through repossession and push low-income people further into crippling debt. Will he advise his Tory Brexit colleagues that there is a long-term economic plan on offer—one that can help hard-working families not to suffer—and it is to vote remain next Thursday?

Cameron: The hon. Gentleman and I are often on opposing sides of arguments, but it says volumes about the breadth of the campaign to remain in a reformed EU that we have the Liberal Democrats as well as the Labour party, the Greens, the trade unions, business, voluntary bodies and so many others all coming from different perspectives but—crucially—all saying that our economy will be better off, and therefore families and our country will be better off, if we remain in. He is absolutely right about interest rates. The last thing that homeowners and homebuyers need—the last thing our country needs—is a hike in interest rates damaging our economy. I am glad he supports a long-term economic plan. Such a plan should include our remaining in a reformed EU.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, cols 1758–1759)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxxxvi) Nigel Adams (Selby and Ainsty) (Con):

I congratulate my right hon. Friend on honouring our manifesto pledge and delivering this historic referendum. Unfortunately, however, we have heard some hysterical scaremongering during the debate, and there are those in this House and the other place who believe that if the British people decide to leave the EU, there should be a second referendum. Will he assure the House and the country that, whatever the result on 24 June, his Government will carry out the wishes of the British people—if the vote is to remain, we remain, but if it is to leave, which I hope it is, we leave?

Cameron: I am very happy to agree with my hon. Friend. “In” means we remain in a reformed EU; “out” means we come out. As the leave campaigners and others have said, “out” means out of the EU, out of the European single market, out of the Council of Ministers—out of all those things—and will then mean a process of delivering on it, which will take at least two years, and then delivering a trade deal, which could take as many as seven years. To anyone still in doubt—there are even Members in the House still thinking about how to vote—I would say: if you have not made up your mind yet, if you are still uncertain, just think about that decade of uncertainty for our economy and everything else, don’t risk it and vote remain.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1759)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: direct answer

(lxxxvii) Mr Christopher Chope (Christchurch) (Con):

I am looking forward to the British people giving me the opportunity to vote against the vindictive emergency Budget. Will my right hon. Friend explain, if the Government are so strapped for cash, why they remain intent on spending £50 billion on HS2?

Cameron: We will be strapped for cash, if we believe the Institute for Fiscal Studies or the National Institute of Economic and Social Research—both impeccably independent—who say that there would be a hole in our public finances of between £20 billion and £40 billion. You do not have to be an economic expert to see this: if the economy shrinks, and there are fewer jobs and lower wages, there will be less in tax receipts. If there is less in tax receipts, we will clearly need to make cuts, put up taxes or increase borrowing. It is a simple matter of mathematics. There is an easy way to avoid that situation—vote to stay in a reformed European Union next Thursday.

(HC Eng 15 June 2016, vol 611, col 1760)

Question type: open

Question attitude: negative

Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: yes

(lxxxviii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

What people in the country are worried about is the extra insecurity for their living standards, jobs, wages and pensions following the EU referendum. In recent days, we have heard uncertain words about the future of some of the major companies in Britain, such as Siemens, which has been here for a very long time. What meetings has the Chancellor had with major companies—Siemens, Visa, Vodafone and others—to try to stabilise the situation?

Cameron: The Leader of the Opposition rightly asked what conversations we are having with business and what preparations we are making to deal with the economic challenges we face. We are in a strong position to meet these challenges, because we have paid down so much of our deficit and we have had strong growth and job creation, but I do not at all belittle the fact that the consequences will be difficult. There are going to be very choppy waters ahead—I do not resile from any of the warnings I gave during the referendum campaign—but we have to find the best way through them. One of the things we must do is to talk to businesses and reassure them about



the stability that there is today and the strength of the British economy. The Business Secretary has met a whole range of businesses already. I have a meeting of my business advisory group tomorrow, and I am inviting other companies to it, including Siemens, which plays a huge role in the British economy. We need to discuss the reassurances about stability that we can give now and the fact that our circumstances do not change until we leave the European Union, and then I will want to hear from them—as we draw up possible blueprints for Britain’s future position with Europe—what they think will be the right answer.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 291–292)

Question type: open

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(lxxxix) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

The credit rating agencies have cut the UK credit rating to double A from double A plus. The Chancellor pledged to keep the triple A rating. What estimate have the Government made of the cost to the Exchequer of this downgrade in borrowing costs and risks to pension funds?

Cameron: The Leader of the Opposition is absolutely right that the credit rating of one agency has been taken down by several points and another has put us on watch. To answer his question directly, the cost to the Exchequer and to the taxpayer will depend on what happens to the interest rates in the market at which Britain can borrow, and it is absolutely right to draw attention to that. As I have said—Mario Draghi, head of the European Central Bank, confirmed this last night—all the warnings were that if we voted to leave the EU there would be difficulties in our own economy, growth rates and instability in markets. We are seeing those things, and we are well prepared for them in the reaction of the Bank of England and the Treasury, but there is no doubt in my mind that these are going to be difficult economic times. We must make sure we maintain our strong economy so we can cope with them, but we should not belittle the challenges: they are going to be difficult and we are going to have to meet them.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 292)

Question type: open

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: indirect answer

(xc) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

All Members of the House should be concerned about indications from business and investors that suggest they see the UK as less attractive, thus putting current and future jobs at risk. In those circumstances, will the Prime Minister consider suspending the Chancellor’s fiscal rule, which is in effect preventing investment?

Cameron: I do not believe that would be the right approach. Business, consumers, investors, and those concerned about our economy want to hear that we have taken huge steps over the past six years to get the budget deficit down, to make the British economy more competitive, and to make us an attractive destination for investment. They want those things to continue, and one way to react to economic difficulties is to ensure that our public finances and economy remain strong. We should not have taken all the steps of the last six years to get the deficit down just to get us on to a more

difficult path. I do not think it would be right to suspend fiscal rules and, as I have said, there are three phases: first, volatility, which the Bank of England and Treasury must cope with; secondly, uncertainty about Britain's future status, which we must bring to an end as fast as possible by examining alternative models and by my successors choosing which one we should go for; and, thirdly, we should bear in mind that long-term damage to the British economy will be based on how good our trading relationship is with the European Union. For my part, I think we want the closest possible trading relationship with the European Union, and that can be discussed and debated in this House as well as by the next Government.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 292–293)

Question type: open

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: indirect answer

(xci) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

I thank the Prime Minister for that answer. The vote last Thursday was a rejection of the status quo—a status quo that clearly is not delivering. There are now 13.5 million people living in poverty in Britain, which is up by 300,000 over the last year. Some 4.5 million people in England and Wales are in insecure work, and two thirds of children in poverty are living in households where at least one adult is in work. The Prime Minister has two months left. Will he leave a one nation legacy that includes the scrapping of the bedroom tax, banning zero-hours contracts, and cancelling cuts to universal credit?

Cameron: I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that of course we need to do more to tackle poverty and to spread wealth and opportunity. However, to try to pretend that last Thursday's vote was a result of the state of the British economy is complete nonsense. The British economy is incomparably stronger than it was six years ago. We must all reflect on our role in the referendum campaign. The right hon. Gentleman says that he put his back into it; all I say is that I would hate to see him when he is not trying.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 293–294)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: yes

(xcii) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

A strong majority voted for Scotland to remain in the European Union. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon is in Brussels today, where she is meeting the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament. Yesterday, there was a standing ovation in the European Parliament when the case was made to protect Scotland's place in Europe. What will the UK Government do to protect Scotland's place in Europe?

Cameron: On the United Kingdom's future and our relationship with the European Union, we need to negotiate the best possible deal for the United Kingdom and the closest possible relationship. That will also be the best possible deal for Scotland. That is what we need to focus on. That is what needs to be done.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 294–295)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xciii) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

On the contrary, the Prime Minister is wrong. Yesterday, the Scottish Parliament, including the Labour party, the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Greens, passed a motion that “mandates the Scottish Government to have discussions with the UK Government, other devolved administrations, the EU institutions and member states to explore options for protecting Scotland’s relationship with the EU, Scotland’s place in the single market and the social, employment and economic benefits that come from that”. Every party in the Scottish Parliament voted for that except the Conservative party, which abstained. When will the Conservatives finally join all the other parties in Scotland in protecting Scotland’s place in Europe?

Cameron: The best way to secure Scotland’s place in the single market is for the United Kingdom to negotiate the closest possible relationship with the European Union, including, in my view, the closest relationship with the single market. Our membership of the European Union is a UK membership and that is where we should take our negotiating stance.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 295)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(xciv) Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab):

The Prime Minister will recall visiting the Vauxhall car plant in my constituency as part of the referendum campaign. Now that we have voted to leave the EU, we face a fight to keep those jobs in this country, so I will urge General Motors to recognise its responsibility to build vehicles where many are bought. I ask the Prime Minister to ensure that there are early talks with General Motors and the wider motor industry, so that it is given the reassurance needed that it will still be able to export motor vehicles to the EU at a competitive price.

Cameron: The hon. Gentleman is absolutely right. The story of the automotive industry in Britain over the past decade has been a remarkably positive one: 150,000 people are directly employed, and another 300,000 people are in the supply and components industry, more of which has been coming onshore in recent years. I remember my visit to his constituency very well. We need to secure the best possible deal for Britain and to ensure that we have that full access to the single market, because one of the reasons why so many companies, including General Motors, Nissan, Toyota and Jaguar Land Rover, have invested in Britain is access to that market. I urge General Motors and others to make their voices heard, and we will certainly be listening to them in the weeks ahead.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 295–296)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: indirect answer

(xcv) Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con):

Yesterday, a former member of my staff was verbally abused and attacked while out shopping in London because of the colour of his skin—he is of Pakistani origin. He was chased down the road by a lady shouting about how we had voted out, and that people like him shoot others and blow people up. Will the Prime Minister reiterate the commitment he has given this morning to do everything in his power to eradicate that evil hatred, and reiterate that leaving the EU should not be used to breed racism but, in fact, the opposite—it should provide us with an opportunity to be much more international rather than just European?

Cameron: We have many imperfections in this country, but we do have a claim to be one of the most successful multi-race, multi-faith and multi-ethnic democracies anywhere on earth, and we should do everything we can to safeguard that. That means having the clearest possible statements from all our political leaders, which we have heard today and should go on hearing. More to the point, we want action by the police and the prosecuting authorities. The laws are there to prosecute people, they should be used, and we will strengthen the guidance in the way that I have suggested. We should absolutely not put up with that in our country.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 296)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: direct answer

(xcvi) Mr Douglas Carswell (Clacton) (UKIP):

We on the leave side should recognise that although we won, it was a narrow mandate and plenty of decent, patriotic people voted for remain. Does the Prime Minister agree that both sides now need to come together to achieve a new post-EU national consensus, whereby we have close links with our friends and allies in Europe and beyond, while reclaiming our sovereignty?

Cameron: Let me thank the hon. Gentleman for making the point that there were people with a deep sense of patriotism on both sides of the argument. I also agree that it is time for people and our country to come together. What is more, he is right that we now have to work very hard on the alternatives. Of course, they were discussed and debated in the referendum campaign, but they were hypothetical alternatives; they are now real alternatives, and one of the roles for the Government in the next few months is to set out the different blueprints—the Canada blueprint, the Swiss blueprint, the Norway blueprint and any other blueprints—and to look at the costs and benefits. That way, people can make a reasoned assessment, now that this is a real choice, rather than a hypothetical one.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 297)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: direct answer

(xcvii) Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con):

There are hundreds and thousands of expat United Kingdom citizens living around Europe who did not vote in the referendum. Many are elderly and frail and live on UK pensions and benefits. Will my right hon. Friend seek to ensure that his successor defends their interests?

Cameron: On the issue of British citizens living overseas, we should reassure people that until Britain leaves the EU, there will be absolutely no change in their status. In the coming weeks, this unit at the heart of Whitehall can go through these issues very methodically and work out what might need to change in all the different scenarios in order to give these people certainty about their future. It is obviously very important that we do that.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 297–298)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: indirect answer

(xcviii) Mike Gapes (Ilford South) (Lab/Co-op):

London is the greatest city in Europe and in the world—[Interruption.] Its prosperity and tax revenue are vital for the whole of the United Kingdom. London voted remain. Does the Prime Minister agree with the Mayor of London—a Labour winner, Sadiq Khan—that London now needs to remain in the European single market, and that it needs additional devolved powers to deal with the problems caused by the vote last week?

Cameron: I certainly agree with the Mayor of London not only that London is the greatest city on earth but that London needs to make its voice heard in these vital negotiations. Obviously, there are many vital industries in London, but it is the capital not only of the UK's financial services but of Europe's financial services, and securing the best possible access to the single market will be a very important challenge in these negotiations. So London should have its voice heard. This is a UK negotiation, but we should listen to the nations of the UK as well as to the cities and the regions.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 298)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: no

(xcix) Mr Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con):

May I take this opportunity to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for his premiership and for the many achievements of his Government, of which we can be proud? I also commend his condemnation of the vile racist attacks that have been reported from all over the country. Will he take this opportunity to condemn the ridiculous and revolting behaviour of a certain MEP in the European Parliament yesterday and make it clear that that MEP does not represent this country and he does not represent—[Interruption.] I am grateful, Mr Speaker. That MEP does not represent this country and he does not represent even the vast majority of patriotic and law-abiding people who voted leave in the referendum.

Cameron: Let me thank my hon. Friend for his kind remarks and congratulate him on the role he played in the campaign. As for what MEPs and others have said, people should judge them by the remarks they make. I have made clear what I felt about Nigel Farage and that appalling poster in the campaign. I think the motive was absolutely clear and everyone can see what he was trying to do.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 298–299)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: yes

(c) Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab):

My constituency of Torfaen has received substantial amounts of EU funding. The leave campaign in the referendum promised that that funding would continue even if we left the European Union. Does the Prime Minister agree with me that if my constituency loses a penny piece of its funding under his successor, that would be a gross betrayal?

Cameron: It is the case that Wales as whole is a net beneficiary of EU funds. As I said throughout the campaign, if the vote was a no vote, I would want to do everything I could to make sure that we continued to help disadvantaged regions and our farmers. Obviously it is difficult for anyone to give guarantees, because we do not know exactly what will happen to our economy in the event of a leave vote, and our economy does face challenges. It will be a matter for my successor as we leave the EU to make good on what they said at the time.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 299)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: no

(ci) Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab):

Sheffield city region was set to receive £180 million in European structural funds through to 2020. Much of that money is now at risk. Those leading the leave campaign did give guarantees that no area and no sector would lose out as a result of Brexit. We know that those promises were worthless, but will the Prime Minister join me in urging his successor to ensure that Sheffield city region is compensated by the UK Government for every pound of funding lost as a result of last Thursday's decision?

Cameron: Obviously, as we negotiate our way out of the EU, a whole range of decisions will have to be made. What a future Government must do is make sure that we help our universities, the sciences and disadvantaged parts of the country and continue to support farmers. There is going to be a challenge, but we will be able to judge for ourselves whether we will have more money to do this because we have left the EU or less money because of the impact on the economy. But that is something that we will all be able to judge for ourselves in the years ahead.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 299–300)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: no

(cii) James Berry (Kingston and Surbiton) (Con):

As well as Brits living abroad in the European Union, there are a number of EU nationals living in this country—including my constituency—who are working hard and paying their taxes, entirely legitimately. What reassurance can the Prime Minister give them that their position is secure? I know that a number of them are very concerned.

Cameron: I think that the first thing we should do is appraise the contribution that those people make to our country. There are 50,000 EU nationals working in our NHS and 60,000 working in our care sector, looking after our elderly as they approach the end of their lives. There are also many working in education. As I said quite exhaustively on Monday, we can obviously say that all rights are guaranteed, as we are members of the European Union. In the future, we will have to make sure—and I have heard members of the leave campaign make this point—that people who are already here, people who are already studying or working, must have their rights and their access guaranteed. However, we cannot say that now; we will have to say it as part of the negotiation that will shortly take place.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 300–301)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: no

(ciii) Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP):

May I join in the tributes paid to the Prime Minister for all that he has done during his time in office? Does he agree that, whatever the disagreements about the European Union—he was in the remain camp, while my party and I were part of the leave campaign—the Union that really matters is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and preserving it should be of the utmost importance?

Cameron: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his remarks. I agree with him that keeping the United Kingdom together is an absolutely paramount national interest for our country.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 301)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: neutral  
 Response type: direct answer

(civ) Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP):

It<sup>4</sup> works, and it is staying together. What is being done to ensure that that continues during the Prime Minister's remaining time in office?

Cameron: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his remarks. I agree with him that keeping the United Kingdom together is an absolutely paramount national interest for our country.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, col 301)

Question type: open

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: no

(cv) Kevin Hollinrake (Thirsk and Malton) (Con):

Having been members of the single market for more than four decades, many businesses have deeply embedded supply chains and customer relationships throughout the European Union. Does the Prime Minister agree that any future deal with the EU must include access to the single market?

Cameron: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, but, obviously, the term “access to the single market” has many potential meanings. Countries that are outside the EU have access to the single market, some through a trade deal and others through World Trade Organisation rules. Obviously the best access is through membership of the single market. What the country will have to decide—and what the next Prime Minister will have to decide—is what sort of access we want, and what are the costs and benefits of that access. I am sure we will talk about that in a moment when I make my statement on the European Council.

(HC Eng 29 June 2016, vol 612, cols 301–302)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: direct answer

(cvi) Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East) (Lab):

Before I ask my question, may I thank the Prime Minister for the support he gave my campaign to get an inquiry into a drug called Primodos, which was given to pregnant women in the 1960s and '70s and resulted in thousands of babies being born with deformities? Our universities are global success stories, outward looking and open for business with the world, and attracting the brightest and the best students and researchers to produce ground-breaking research in areas from cancer to climate change. In the last year, UK universities received £836 million— [interruption] What assurances can the Prime Minister give that, in the light of the fact that we are now out of the European Union, that money will be safe?

Cameron: First, let me thank the hon. Lady for her thanks. She has raised the case of Primodos many times. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has been gathering evidence for a review by an expert working group on medicines, and it has met on three occasions. I think we are making progress. On universities, until Britain leaves the European Union, we get the full amount of funding under Horizon and other programmes, as we would expect. All contracts under

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<sup>4</sup> The United Kingdom



them have to be fulfilled, but it will be for a future Government, as they negotiate the exit from the EU, to make sure that we domestically continue to fund our universities in a way that makes sure that they continue to lead the world.

(HC Eng 6 July 2016, vol 612, col 877)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: overt  
 Agenda shift: no

(cvii) Danny Kinahan (South Antrim) (UUP):

Brexit really threatens the Union. Will the Prime Minister work with his successors to ensure that we have somebody that will pull together all the countries of the Union and the overseas territories so that we can all work and thrive together?

Cameron: I believe that Northern Ireland is stronger than it was six years ago—58,000 more people in work, the full devolution of justice and home affairs delivered under this Government, the Saville report published, record inward investment and the creation of new jobs. Like him, I care passionately about our United Kingdom, as do all of us in this House. We need to make sure that, as we leave the European Union, we work out how to keep the benefits of the common travel area. Hard work is being done now with civil servants in Northern Ireland, Whitehall and the Republic of Ireland, and the pace of that work needs to quicken.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, col 284)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: medium evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(cviii) Jeremy Corbyn (Islington North) (Lab):

I would like the Prime Minister to address another issue that the House voted on last week. I have a question from Nina—[Interruption.] It is a question from somebody who deserves an answer. She says: “I would like to know, if there is any possibility, that an EU citizen, that has lived in the UK for thirty years can have their right of permanent residence... revoked and deported, depending on the Brexit negotiations”. There has been no clear answer to this question. It is one that worries a very large number of people, and it would be good if, in his last Question Time, the Prime Minister could at least offer some assurance to those people.

Cameron: Let me reassure Nina that there is absolutely no chance of that happening to someone in those circumstances. We are working hard to do what we want, which is to give a guarantee to EU citizens that they will have their rights respected—all those who have come to this country. The only circumstance in which I could ever envisage a future Government trying to undo that guarantee would be if British citizens in other European countries did not have their rights respected. I think it is important to have reciprocity. The new Prime Minister will be working to give that guarantee as fast as we can.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, cols 287–288)

Question type: closed  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: direct answer

(cix) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

[...] However, the Prime Minister's legacy will undoubtedly be that he has brought us to the brink of being taken out of the European Union, so we on these Benches will not be applauding his premiership. What advice has he given his successor on taking Scotland out of the EU against the wishes of Scottish voters?

Cameron: In terms of what the right hon. Gentleman says about Scotland, the United Kingdom and Europe, my advice to my successor, who is a brilliant negotiator, is that we should try to be as close to the European Union as we can be for the benefits of trade, co-operation and security. The channel will not get any wider once we leave the European Union, and that is the relationship we should seek. That would be good for the United Kingdom and good for Scotland.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, cols 289–290)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: subtle evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(cx) Angus Robertson (Moray) (SNP):

The Prime Minister's successor is very well known in Scotland at present—this is across all the front pages—because of the threat to deport the very much loved and liked Brain family from the highlands. The first vote of her premiership is likely to be on imposing Trident against the wishes of almost every single MP from Scotland. Meanwhile, she says that she plans to plough on with Brexit, regardless of the fact that Scotland voted to remain in the EU. How does the outgoing Prime Minister think that all that will go down in Scotland?

Cameron: First of all, specifically on the Brain family, Mrs Brain came to this country on a tier 4 student visa to study for a Scottish history degree. She completed it and her husband and son came as dependants. We have given them an extension until 1 August to put in an application for a work visa in the normal way, and I very much hope that will happen. On Trident, there will be a vote in this House. It is right that this House should decide. Actually, many people in Scotland support our nuclear deterrent, maintaining it and the jobs that come in Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman asks about the record of this Government when it comes to Scotland. I will tell him what it is: 143,000 more people in work in Scotland; massive investment in the renewable industries in Scotland; the two biggest warships in our history built in Scotland; a powerhouse Parliament; a referendum that was legal, decisive and fair; and, I might add, a Scotsman winning Wimbledon twice while I was Prime Minister. Never mind Indy 2; I think it is time for Andy 2.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, col 290)

Question type: open  
 Question attitude: positive  
 Response type: substantial evasion  
 Overt/covert evasion: covert  
 Agenda shift: yes

(cxi) Jeff Smith (Manchester, Withington) (Lab):

The Prime Minister came to office promising to keep the UK's triple A rating, to end top-down NHS reorganisations and to stop his party banging on about Europe. How would he say that has gone?

Cameron: On the economic record, 2.5 million more jobs, the deficit cut by two thirds, 2.9 million apprenticeships, a million more businesses, and a growth rate that has been at the top of the developed world are all because of the choices that we made. Because we did that, we have been able to back our NHS with a 10% funding increase, which is more than £10 billion in real terms in this Parliament. As for Europe, we have to settle these issues. It is right that, when trying to settle a really big constitutional issue, you not just rely on Parliament, but ask the people as well. We made a promise and we kept a promise.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, col 291)

Question type: open

Question attitude: neutral

Response type: medium evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: yes

(cxii) Mr Adrian Bailey (West Bromwich West) (Lab/Co-op):

This week is Black Country Week. Yesterday, black country manufacturers were in Parliament demonstrating the high-quality products that are exported worldwide. Will the outgoing Prime Minister impress on the incoming Prime Minister the huge importance of maintaining access to the EU single market during Brexit negotiations so that we can maximise the black country's contribution to exports, productivity and jobs?

Cameron: I absolutely agree with the hon. Gentleman. We have seen in the west midlands 173,000 more people in work under this Government. We have seen something of a renaissance in manufacturing, particularly in the automotive sector, some of which is, indeed, in the black country. It is vital for that industry that we have proper access to the single market. I think he is right; this is one of the things we absolutely have to focus on. I want these high-quality automotive and aerospace manufacturing firms to go from strength to strength in our country and making sure we get that access to Europe is going to be vital.

(HC Eng 13 July 2016, vol 613, cols 292–293)

Question type: closed

Question attitude: positive

Response type: subtle evasion

Overt/covert evasion: covert

Agenda shift: yes